The Appendix

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A new journal of narrative & experimental history





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The Appendix is a quarterly journal of experimental and narrative history; though at times outlandish, everything in its pages is as true as the sources allow. *The Appendix* solicits articles from historians, writers, and artists committed to good storytelling, with an eye for the strange and a suspicion of both jargon and traditional histories. A creature of the web, its format takes advantage of the flexibility of hypertext and modern web presentation techniques to experiment with and explore the process and method of writing history.

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CONTENTS

Off the Map

Letter from the Editors: Issue Four: Off the Map 4

Letters to *The Appendix* 6

Open Source
Mapping Babel:
A Sixteenth-Century Indigenous Map from Mexico 10
Barbara Mundy

Field Notes
Cropped Out:
Environmental History Through a Car Window 16
Emily Brownell

Off the Record 24
Mattias Fibiger

Death of a Sailor: Chapter 3: The Locked Room 32
Christopher Heaney

White Nights 40
Maya Koretzky

Indelible Ink: The Deep History of Tattoo Removal 47
Mairin Odle

The Politics of the Turtle Feast 53
India Mandelkern

Poetry
Animal Kingdoms 61
Katherine Noble

Reclaiming a Fugitive Landscape 64
Susanna Ashworth and Jonathan Hepworth

Proto-Spam: Spanish Prisoners and Confidence Games 75
Robert Whitaker

Made in Taiwan?:
An Eighteenth-Century Frenchman's Fictional Formosa 83
Benjamin Breen

91 **The Curse of Coherence: Cold War CIA Funding for Oulipo's *Confidence-Man***
Roy Scranton

106 **Voice Hero: The Inventor of Karaoke Speaks**
Daisuke Inoue and Robert Scott Field

Fiction
114 **The Golden Likeness**
Ariel Ron

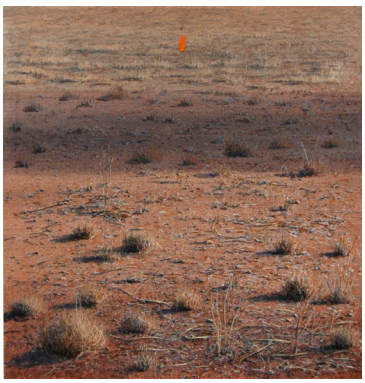
Review
126 ***The Silence of Our Friends***
Hannah Carney

Local History
131 **Feet First: Walking in Houston**
Kyle Shelton

Not-So-Funny Pages Excerpt
138 ***March, Book One***
John Lewis, Andrew Aydin and Nate Powell

Interview
146 **March: Interview with Nate Powell and Andrew Aydin**
Christopher Heaney

The Appendix, Appendixed.
158 **Cold Cartography:**
The First Thule Expedition to Greenland, 1912
Kevin Cannon



Note on the Cover:
Emily Adams painted *1600 Saint Michaels Drive* from an observed landscape. The painting, she explains, "emphasizes the gestural concomitants of the human processes of organizing and structuring space for our own needs." She renders the landscape with sharp accuracy, while depicting human residue (be it construction tape, plasticade or flag) with the single mark of a brush. She views such objects as their own form of mark-making—as signs and pentimenti that we leave on the world around us

Letter from the Editors:
Issue Four: Off the Map



ymara speakers from the southern Andes of Peru and Bolivia possess a unique spatial concept of time. To refer to the past, they point forward; when speaking of the future, they gesture over their shoulders. The idea is that because we can see it and know it, the past lays ahead of us. The future, which we don't know, and cannot see, lurks behind.*

From which it follows: When we walk forward, we walk towards the past.

To use the Aymara formulation of knowledge, this issue of *The Appendix*, 'Off the Map,' began way over our right shoulder. Initially, we meant it to be a 'blank' issue, one in which we didn't tie the content together with a theme like 'Illusions' or 'Out Loud.' But when the articles started coming in, a more natural theme developed: one concerned with a different sort of geography, a geography of absence and hidden traces. We gathered pieces deeply concerned with how to *look* at history, and how to understand the motivations of the people who record it. And then there were the pieces that a grab-bag issue like this one truly does deserve, so distinctive that no other theme could fit them. Coming up on our one-year anniversary, it's safe to say that 'Off the Map' is the most *Appendix*-y issue of *The Appendix* yet.

We begin with a sixteenth-century map of Mexico. Though commissioned to familiarize the king of Spain with his territories, the indigenous creator poured in his own local understanding of time and space, constructing a map filled with glyphs that harkened back to the pre-Columbian era. We puzzle over it, attempting to understand the mind that made it, just as our next author, a newly-minted historian, thinks through the smells that take her to work in a meat-packing town in Colorado. Another contributor wonders at the concrete laid over Houston's urban past, trying to find stories in unassuming city blocks. As our article on a runaway slave named Jackson attests, landscape imprints itself on us just as we imprint upon it.

These pieces dwell on the displaced, the hidden, and the forgotten. A young White House photographer speaks up in a presidential meeting, contradicting Kissinger, but his objections drop out of the official version. A convicted murderer and a disgraced journalist sit in a prison cell in 1830s New York, crafting a story of loss and slavery that might even be true. A college student slips into St. Petersburg history obliquely, by way of a darkened stairwell and a midnight sun.

When we go off the map, we are forced to rely on our fellow travelers. We must figure out who to trust, and who can be trusted. It's an old problem to have. An *Appendix* editor reveals an Enlightenment impostor who tried to convince London that he was from a bloodthirsty, fictional Taiwan—but was likely just a clever yet penniless Frenchman. Another historian traces the genealogy of the Nigerian email scam, taking it back to the Spanish prisoner letters of the nineteenth century. And in yet another article, we get into the trust of taste: why did eighteenth-century English aristocrats like to eat sea turtles so much?

*Much was made of this difference a few years ago in an article by Rafael E. Núñez and Eve Sweetser: "With the Future Behind Them: Convergent Evidence From Aymara Language and Gesture in the Crosslinguistic Comparison of Spatial Construals of Time," *Cognitive Science* 30 (2006), 29. To wit:

> In Example 3 (male speaker, 73, from Pachama; bilingual interview), the speaker is talking about his "ancestors" (*achachilas*) when the interviewer suggests that this might have been the time of the Incas (*gentil timpu*). The speaker, who is thinking of more immediate ancestors such as great-grandparents, responds … "That is even further away before," meaning that the Incas existed far earlier than what he is talking about. He gestures with both hands, an alternating rotating gesture upward and away from the body.

As to why, the authors suggested that it may partly come from the emphasis the Aymara language puts on visual perception as a source of knowledge. It turns out that Aymara is a historian's dream language, distinguishing between firsthand knowledge and secondhand knowledge. If we are describing an event that we had witnessed, the grammatical construction *-Vna* is added to the sentence; if we've only heard about it, *-tayna* is added.



Peter Matthews, *A Volume of Ocean Knowledge*, 2013.

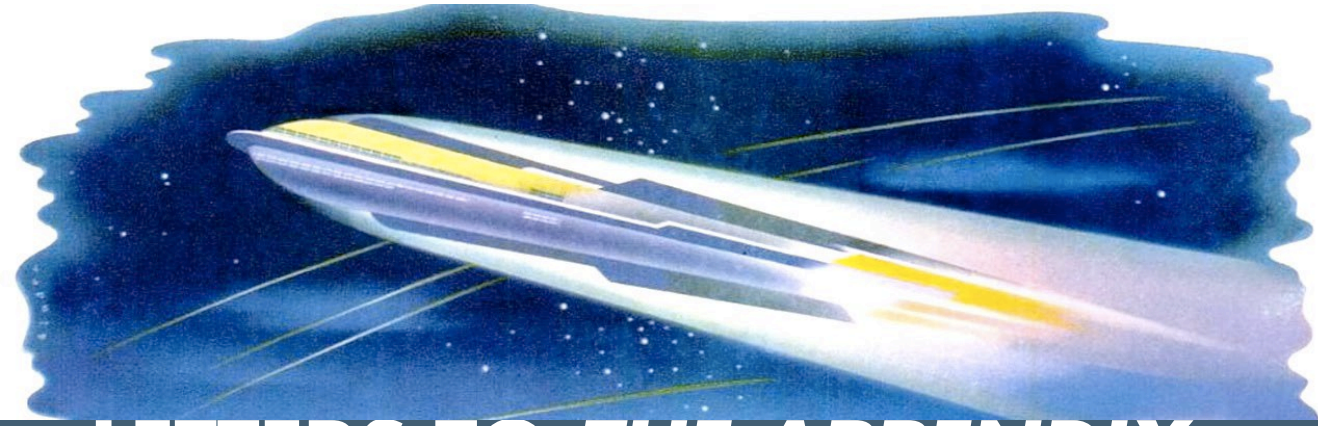
Finally, we come to the line between fact and fiction, a line that, upon closer inspection, we paint ourselves. One of our contributors claims to have uncovered a CIA plot to fund an avant-garde translation of a novel by Herman Melville. Do you believe him? Another offers up a short fiction of death, gold, and speculation in nineteenth-century New York. And we go in-depth with an interview and a review of work in one medium, comics, that retraces the landscape of American Civil Rights. Congressman John Lewis has written a graphic memoir of his life, in which readers walk forward into the past he lived: we talk with the cartoonist whose pen gave that vision form.

As in other human societies, the Aymara mental universe uses space as metaphor; whether that implies a similar concern with distinction—between 'here' and 'there,' 'us' and them'—is unclear. The Greeks had their *oikoumene*, or 'Inhabited World,' the Chinese their Middle Kingdom, the Algonquians of North America their Turtle Island. These conceptions of place, and of community, were defined by the no-places around them—the sun-scorched wastes beyond the oikoumene, the barbarians ringing the Celestial Empire, the endless waters upon which the turtle floated.

As Jimmy Carter's message from Earth in our 'Letters to *The Appendix*' attests, humans of the Space Age still hold to a form of that dichotomy: there's the earth, and then the uncharted void around it. But not for much longer. We keep going forward—or backward—into the future, pushing up against the boundaries that delimit our worlds.

By going off existing maps, we create new ones: new ways of seeing, new ways to make sense of the terrain that overtakes us from the future and rears up ahead, from the past.

From an advertisement in the September 1943 issue of *Life* magazine.



LETTERS TO *THE APPENDIX*

Welcome again to The Appendix *letters page, where we offer correspondence from the past.*

Our fourth issue, "Off the Map," features articles about runaway slaves, impostors, fly-on-the-wall photographers, and prisoners with shifting identities. This theme of dislocation inspired us to search for a special type of letter: weird.

Below you'll find a meandering account of a panther fighting a bear (it doesn't end well), a rare example of journalistic trolling from the Greatest Generation, and a letter that Jimmy Carter 'mailed' to extraterrestrials in 1977. We kick things off with a strangely avant-garde transcription of overheard conversation among the denizens of an 1809 bar.

As always, we hope they inspire you to write letters of your own—to The Appendix *and to parties deserving and otherwise.*

—The Editors

"Overheard in a London Pub," *Morning Chronicle*, September 20, 1809.

Sir,

Yesterday evening, having taken my usual place in a much-frequented public room, not far from Covent Garden, I was a good deal amused by the conversation of the surrounding company, which consisted of more than twenty persons of different ages, and apparently such as are commonly called Gentlemen…

[This] suggested the thought of supplying your numerous readers with as accurate a report of this instructive *conversazione*, as it is in my power to give:

> Castile soap—bad grammar, and Tal—Talleyrand—the Devil on Two Sticks—written by—Sir Richard—who never eats any thing, except—pale ink, and bluish paper—with mustard and a *leetle* Cayenne—Sir William Curtis—sailed—in a basin of turtle soup—like the man in the play—shadowed with laurels—of which to my certain knowledge there are two kinds—in the Island of Walcheren—cursed hard running—a famous cure for bone-spavin—Lord Wellington—look at the Racing Calendar.

—PETER PUNCH, Swan Tavern, near St. Martin's Lane, London

"The Forget Me Not For 1836," *The New Sporting Magazine*, December, 1835.

Between the bear and the panther a war of extermination has been waged almost from the period of their release from the ark at Ararat.

I have in my mind an incident in point, said to have been witnessed by a hunter. A large bear, having scented out the lair of a panther, came upon it in the absence of the old one, and destroyed her young. Bruin very well knew that for this invasion of a private dwelling, and the murderous deed committed therein, he should be compelled to fight. The panther would soon return, and be upon his track; and, as well might an alderman think of waddling from an antelope as a clumsy bear from such a feline pursuer as this.

The aggressor, therefore, lost no time by a futile attempt at retreat; but, like a skillful general, forthwith set about securing the most advantageous position for a battle. And this he selected with the skill of a French martinet. Crossing a deep ravine from the direction of the panther's lair, Bruin took a deliberate survey of the ground, and at length perch himself high on the opposite bank, beneath a shelving rock, and so completely covered in his position that he could only be attacked in front. Here he raised himself upon his haunches, and calmly awaited the onset. It was not long before the screams of the bereaved panther were heard, and she presently made her appearance upon the opposite verge of the ravine. Her eyes glared upon Bruin, who, nothing daunted, looked fiercely back upon her. At length, maddened with rage, the panther sprang with unerring precision upon the bear, but was received by a blow from one of his tremendous paws, which knocked her back into the valley—Bruin still keeping his position, though with the loss of an eye.



"Lion, Bear, Fox and Wolf" etched by Samuel Howitt, published in *A New Work of Animals, principally designed from The Fables of Aesop, Gay and Phaedrus*, 1810.

The panther rallied; selected a new starting point; and bristling fiercely, sprang again, and was received in the same undaunted manner. The attack and defence, with wild screams and surly growls, was continued for some time, until at length the panther succeeded in planting her talons so deeply in the body of the bear as to prevent another separation until the contest should be decided. The hug was now mutually desperate, and the conflict terrible.

At length the bear lost his balance, and the combatants rolled over each other into the bed of the ravine, where the contest was continued for an hour. When all became still, the hunter found both monsters lying in what was literally a deadly embrace.

—ANONYMOUS, Ackermann and Co., *Strand*

"An Enormous Gas-Bag," *The Popular Science Monthly*, June 29, 1885.

Messrs. Editors:

SIR: The writer of the paper in the July Monthly on aerial navigation is certainly mild in his predictions of success, and still he is much too sanguine, as it seems to me. Besides the employment of a new motor, the recent French experiments have accomplished nothing not done before. If anything, they have emphasized the difficulties long recognized by aeronauts, without bestowing an iota of anything valuable toward their solution.

An enormous gas-bag is employed to encounter atmospheric resistance, and then to overcome the resistance a motive power is employed. It is the old way. One would think that effort would stop in this direction. It seems to be an infatuation similar to the "perpetual-motion" craze, just as persistent and just as hopeless.

It is the humming-bird process, and seems unfitted to man's use. Why not try the albatross or condor method, where gravity is the motive power, all active mechanism being dispensed with, and shape and position brought into prominence as the factors of success?

Respectfully,
I. Lancaster, 335 Wabash Avenue, Chicago

"Trolling from the Editors," *Life*, September 1943."

Sirs,

In your story on Anthony Eden you state in the closing paragraph that Anthony Eden may never be Prime Minister but that he will "surely be remembered for his hats." Such a statement is utterly absurd, childish and completely lacking in humor and dignity.

— J. TEN-BROECK BAKER, Brooklyn, NY

The editors respond: The hats are still worth remembering.


● The hats are still worth remembering. See below.—ED.

The many hats of Anthony Eden, from the September 1943 issue of *Life*.

And finally, a piece of correspondence that has largely been forgotten, but could potentially go down in history as the most important—and longest-lasting—letter ever sent: Jimmy Carter's message on board the *Voyager* spacecraft. Anne Druyan and Carl Sagan famously created the 'Golden Record' to communicate with extraterrestrials who might encounter *Voyager*, but most people forget that Carter was given the honor of writing humanity's official letter of introduction to the universe and its inhabitants. As he notes, "it is likely to survive a billion years."

"President Carter's Letter to Extraterrestrials," Voyager Spacecraft, July 29, 1977.

This Voyager spacecraft was constructed by the United States of America. We are a community of 240 million human beings among the more than 4 billion who inhabit the planet Earth. We human beings are still divided into nation states, but these states are rapidly becoming a single global civilization.

We cast this message into the cosmos. It is likely to survive a billion years into our future, when our civilization is profoundly altered and the surface of the Earth may be vastly changed. Of the 200 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy, some—perhaps many—may have inhabited planets and spacefaring civilizations. If one such civilization intercepts Voyager and can understand these recorded contents, here is our message:

This is a present from a small distant world, a token of our sounds, our science, our images, our music, our thoughts, and our feelings. We are attempting to survive our time so we may live into yours. We hope someday, having solved the problems we face, to join a community of galactic civilizations. This record represents our hope and our determination, and our good will in a vast and awesome universe.



OPEN SOURCE

Mapping Babel: A Sixteenth-Century Indigenous Map from Mexico

Barbara Mundy

In the late 1570s, a printed broadsheet from the King of Spain was sent out to local officials in cities and towns in his American domains. In an itemized list, it asked for information about local climate, geography, history, economy, and religion—a proto-survey.

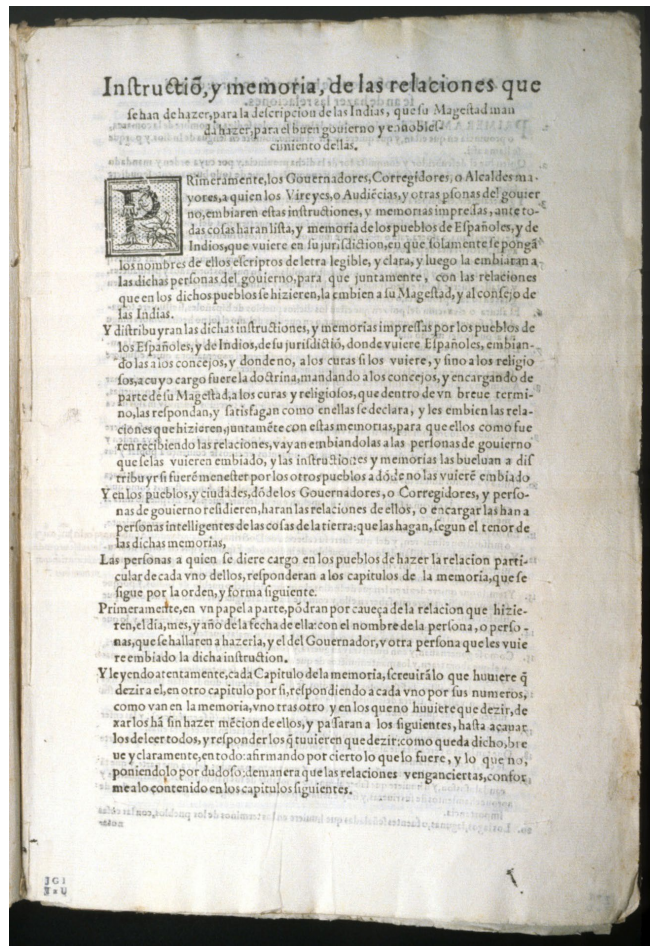
We can think of the questionnaire—with its bold heading, "Instructiõ, y memoria"—as the initial domino that set off a cavalcade of acts of translation, particularly in New Spain, the region encompassing modern-day Mexico and Guatemala. It passed from the central hub of the imperial bureaucracy in Mexico City

Map on opposite page courtesy of Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin

out to crown officials in the provinces. There, they considered its fifty questions with care, and in indigenous majority cities and towns (there were many) they called native leaders into their office, often called the *casa real*. An interpreter translated the questions into Nahuatl, or Zapotec, or Mixtec, or whatever the common language was. If Europeans believed that the world's once-unified language had broken at Babel and scattered across the face of the earth, then Mexico's hundreds of indigenous languages sat at the extreme frontier of that linguistic diaspora.

In those Mexican casas reales, the replies were translated back into Spanish, set down in alphabetic script on expensive imported paper, carried back to Mexico City, and then shipped to Spain. Today, these replies, known as the *Relaciones geográficas*, are collectively the most important source for regional history in the sixteenth-century New World—their raw data translated into the clean prose of a historical text.

The line of falling dominos, those translated questions and replies passing from one mind and hand to another, had an offshoot that began in the early set of exchanges in one casa real. Question ten asked for a *pintura*, a term that might be translated to *tlacuilolli* in Nahuatl, understood to be a map of the town or region. But the *tlacuilo* (the person who created the tlacuilolli) was more than a scrivener. Rather, he (and sometimes she) was understood to have the capacity to translate immaterial knowledge into visible form. Every act of putting a brush loaded with pigment onto paper was an inquiry into the nature of the world.



Instructiõ, y memoria, de las relaciones que se han de hazer, para la descripcion de las Indias, que su Magestad mãda hazer, para el buen gouierno y enoblecimiento dellas.

PRimeramente, los Gouernadores, Corregidores, o Alcaldes mayores, a quien los Vireyes, o Audiẽcias, y otras psonas del gouierno, embiaren estas instructiones, y memorias impressas, ante todas cosas haran lista, y memoria de los pueblos de Espãoles, y de Indios, que viere en su jurisdiction, en que solamente se pongã los nombres de ellos escripros de letra legible, y clara, y luego la embiaran a las dichas personas del gouierno, para que juntamente, con las relaciones que en los dichos pueblos se hizieren, la embien a su Magestad, y al consejo de las Indias.

Y distribuyran las dichas instructiones, y memorias impressas por los pueblos de los Espãoles, y de Indios, de su jurisdiciõ, donde viere Espãoles, embiando las a los concejos, y dondeno, a los curas si los viere, y sino a los religiosos, a cuyo cargo fuere la doctrina, mandando a los concejos, y encargando de parte de su Magestad, a los curas y religiosos, que dentro de vn breue termino, las respondan, y satisfagan como en ellas se declara, y les embien las relaciones que hizieren, juntamẽte con estas memorias, para que ellos como fueren recibiendo las relaciones, vayan embiandolas a las personas de gouierno que se las vuieren embiado, y las instructiones y memorias las bueluan a distribuyr si fuere menester por los otros pueblos a dõde no las vuiere embiado.

Y en los pueblos, y ciudades, dõde los Gouernadores, o Corregidores, y personas de gouierno residieren, haran las relaciones de ellos, o encargar las han a personas intelligentes de las cosas de la tierra: que las hagan, segun el tenor de las dichas memorias,

Las personas a quien se diere cargo en los pueblos de hazer la relacion particular de cada vno dellos, responderan a los capitulos de la memoria, que se sigue por la orden, y forma siguiente.

Primeramente, en vn papel a parte, põdran por cauega de la relacion que hizieren, el dia, mes, y año de la fecha de ella: con el nombre de la persona, o personas, que se hallaren a hazerla, y el del Gouernador, o otra persona que les vuiere embiado la dicha instruction.

Y leyendo atentamente, cada Capitulo de la memoria, screuirãlo que huuiere q̃ dezir a el, en otro capitulo por si, respondiendo a cada vno por sus numeros, como van en la memoria, vno tras otro, y en los que no huuiere que dezir, dexarlos hã sin hazer mẽcion de ellos, y pasaran a los siguientes, hasta acabar los de leer todos, y responder los q̃ tuuieren que dezir: como queda dicho, breue y claramente, en todo: afirmando por cierto lo que lo fuere, y lo que no, poniendolo por dudoso: de manera que las relaciones vengan ciertas, conforme a lo contenido en los capitulos siguientes.

The printed text of the Relación Geográfica questionnaire, 1577. Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin



Cempoala region with rough area covered on the map or pintura of the Relación Geográfica of Cempoala highlighted.
Google Earth



The map of the Relación Geográfica of Cempoala, with paper joins highlighted in white.
Diagram by the author

The pintura from the region of Cempoala is one of these acts of translation. It shows us a region to the northeast of Mexico City, and on the expanse of paper, measuring 67 x 81.5 cm, its creator has depicted a region of about 600 square miles.

The first act of translation came with the material surface. Native paper was unsized and flexible, and native painters would pound together sheets to achieve the size appropriate to the object being represented. The Cempoala map was created out of imported European paper. Valued for its smooth surface, European paper came in set parameters. But rather than having their map conform to the standardized European sheet size, Cempoala's artist(s) made the Spanish paper resemble its indigenous counterpart, piecing sheets together. The lines set on the image below mark the four large sheets, with two narrow additions across the top.

The detail below shows where one of the narrow strips was attached: the slightly darker surface below the join results from the adhesive seeping through the paper. Why the modification? Was the map's maker guided by an ideal set of proportions? Was s/he copying an extant map?

The paper shows one act of translation. But what were the others that took place to create the map? What other languages—the language of the body, the language of the sacred—found a place on its surface?

In our experience of the physical landscape, it is our mobile body that is the orienting pivot in space. Modern maps and landscape paintings demand that our body be static, fixed in space, viewing from one point, one orientation.

The Cempoala map, however, has no fixed orientation, and the presumed viewer is a

mobile one, the body alive in space. To see the map, you must move around the work, reorienting yourself to its features. You must step back, away, to see the whole, and come close to see the hand of the painter, knowledge translated into paint.

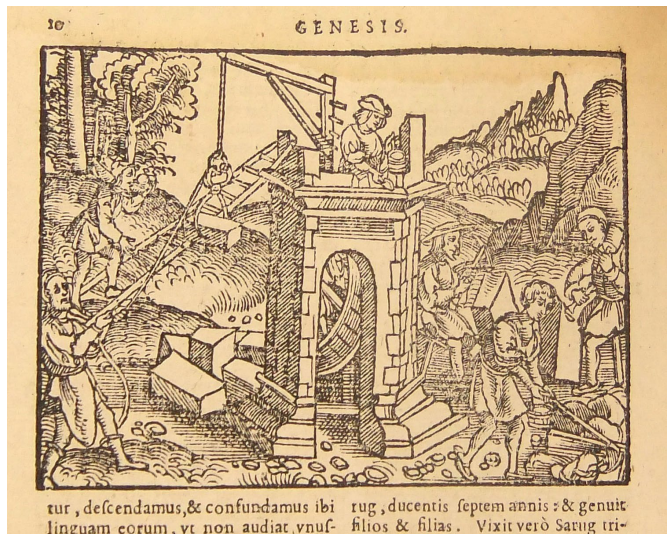
Seen up close, the map links image and word. The town of Tepemaxalco is shown—as are others on the map—with a conventional sign for a Christian chapel: a small building drawn in perspective with one side marked by a shadowing grey wash, topped with belfry and cross. This icon is itself a translation, almost certainly originating in one of the European prints that the native painter knew. Below is one such woodcut, set into a Bible printed in 1561 and imported to Mexico. In the scene from Genesis, the Tower of Babel is erected, and in the illustration, the basic conventions for rendering in perspective and shading are set out.

Tepemaxalco registers the shattering of a common language in other ways. Across the map, names appear in both pictographic and alphabetic script. The pictograph for Tepemaxalco registers some of its Nahuatl components: *tepetl*, 'hill,' *maitl*, 'hand,' *xalli*, 'sand' and *co*,'place of.' Below, the name is written in alphabetic script, probably introduced by the Franciscans who evangelized this region. The writer used both a different instrument—note the thin, sharp lines made by the edge of the pen's nib on the 'e' and the 'p'—and a different ink, iron gall, revealed by the rusty brown.

The red pigment seen on the cactus fruit was derived from the crushed body of the cochineal bug, which feeds on the leaves of the nopal cactus. Red visually unifies the *nochtli*—



Relación Geográfica of Cempoala, detail of Tepemaxalco.
Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, University of Texas at Austin



Unknown artist, The tower of Babel, from Genesis 11, *Biblia Sacra, ex postremis doctorum omnium vigiliis* (Lyon: Jacob de Millis, 1561), 10.
Christoph Keller, Jr. Library,
General Theological Seminary, New York, NY

The place-name of Cempoala.
Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin



the blood-red fruit of the cactus, likened in pre-Hispanic period to the human heart—and the bell of the church, a new sonic presence in this landscape, rung to mark a Mass or a death.

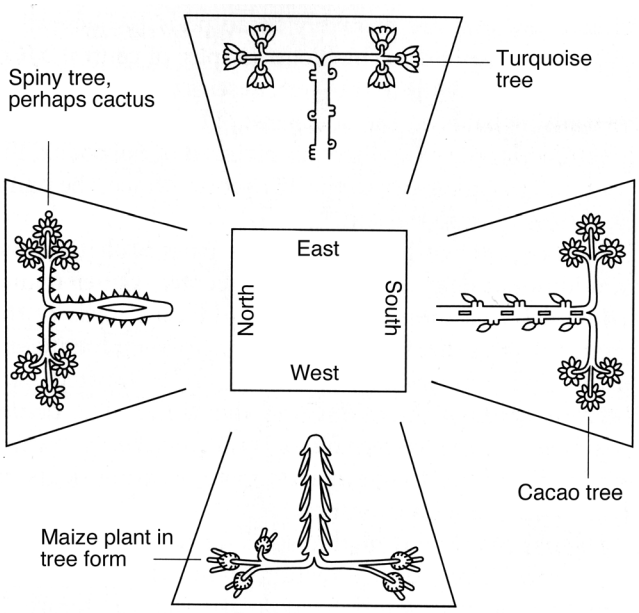
The signal act of translation is to be found in the place-name of Cempoala itself, which dominates the map. The name derives from the Nahuatl *cempoalli*, or 'twenty,' but this is not a logograph. Instead, it is an enormous bell-shaped hill symbol. The figure at the top is an indigenous no-

ble, wearing discs of turquoise in his pierced ears and lip, his hair bound by a red leather strap. The artist revealed its deeper nature in this visual sign by covering it with the diamond pattern of the skin of the earth monster, Tlaltecuhtli, whose body had been ripped apart to create the habitable world.

The symbol's central axis is dominated by another nopal cactus, and on this one three birds cluster. Easily identifiable are the nectar-loving hummingbird, to the left, and the owl. The bird on the right looks like a great blue heron, with the rusty legs of the heron translated to a pinkish underbelly here. An anecdotal nature scene translated from European landscape painting? Perhaps not. Instead, it may be a depiction of the great world trees that supported indigenous Mexico's skies, at whose top perched a celestial bird.

The image below is drawn from the diagram of the cosmos that opens the Codex Fejérváry-Mayer, a pre-Hispanic sacred manuscript. Here, in each of the four quadrants of the world, a bird sits at the top of a world tree. In Cempoala, it is unresolved why the artist represented three birds when one would suffice, but the inclusion of such a potent symbol within the place name shows the deep imprint of long-held spatial templates.

The map of Cempoala was a stopping point for that initial domino-chain of translations. Sacred ideas about the world were set in painted forms. Color-saturated pictographs settled down with alphabetic script. The features of the landscape were compressed and frozen on a flat page. But we can also see the Cempoala map as the starting



Drawing of the four directions of the world, after Codex Fejérváry-Mayer, fol. 1r., fifteenth-early sixteenth century.
Diagram by the author

point for yet further translations and transformations. When experiencing the physical landscape, the viewer stands at center, but in viewing the Relación Geográfica of Cempoala, *the map itself* becomes the central pivot in the encounter. And in the fragments of the map reproduced here on a computer screen—cut out and isolated from the larger whole, scaled up and scaled down—an encounter with the centuries-old object is translated afresh into a digital language.

Even today, the scattering across the face of the earth continues and new languages are born.

The author and *The Appendix* would like to thank Michael Hironymous and the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas, and Rev. Andrew Kadel and the Christoph Keller, Jr. Library for making their images freely available to a larger public.

Cropped Out:
Environmental History Through a Car Window

Emily Brownell

I don't love to drive, but last year I committed myself to a lifestyle that revolves around it. I took a job teaching history in Greeley, Colorado, and decided to live in Fort Collins, about forty minutes away. Colorado drivers turn pushy on the freeway and the interstate offers little more than antiseptic views of big box stores: the Centerra Outlet Mall in Loveland is the main beacon you pass on the way to my university.

Nothing in this new landscape connected me to my work. I study urban Africa, and I write about the history of waste. Trash is an amazing topic for a lazy scholar; it is chock full of metaphorical potential. Encountering waste is a sensory experience that embodies multitudes of biological and cultural taboos, and thus holds a powerful ability to tell stories. But its power has always struck me as far more evident in the tight, thrifty geographies of cities, where the limits of space force confrontations with our own trash. Even when I am not looking at waste, my work still seeks out what gets scuttled to the margins. This new landscape feels too open and flat for that. To my unfocused eyes, it seems eerily free of secrets: a margin-less blur for miles in each direction beyond the frame of my car windows.



The road this morning has patches of ice. My car tells me it is 16 degrees out. The sky is still mercifully blue. Most of the fields are cut short, laid bare and dotted with snow. The giant wheeled industrial irrigation sprinklers look like delicate dinosaur fossils hovering above the brown and white. It's November now; I've settled into the job and joined a carpool with two of my new colleagues. Looking around, I realize that our route, taking a wide berth around the interstate, is a literal backwater of environmental history. In particular, the smells that overcome us on the road and the cloud of smoke that hangs above Greeley's skyline force me to reconsider the scenery. Our commute is an olfactory rite of passage every morning and evening and so I decide to inventory its odors. It's time to peer closer at the flatness.



Sheep along Highway 14.
Emily Brownell

Driving to Work

Each morning I leave my house going east on Mulberry Street, filtering through a few lights and then onto a two-lane country road. Twenty minutes later, one right turn on an unassumingly numbered road, then a left turn ten minutes after that, followed by a quick right onto the Pan-American Highway, and I am on the outskirts of Greeley. The drive is the clearest articulation of my new reality. Having left a big city behind, I have exchanged my exasperation over traffic for the maddening crawl of industrial tractors.

Once we're about ten miles out of Fort Collins, the first smell to hit my nose is the North Weld County Dump run by Waste Management, though the scent rarely seems to gather much strength this time of year. There's a short line of blinking garbage trucks in the left lane as I pass by, but it is hard to see much from the road besides a long row of tall netting. The type you see around baseball diamonds. A collection of white birds hovers above the trash heaps.

Craning my neck to look in, I remember touring a municipal waste dump in Lagos, Nigeria. Lent tall pairs of gumboots, we set out across the dump, me in utter disbelief of where I was and what I was doing. The sanitation trucks would tilt their loads off the back end as men with iron hooks in their right hands and bags in their left rescued anything of miniscule value. Meanwhile, white herons would stalk through piles of trash trailing soggy plastic bags pinned by their elegant legs. I imagine the Waste Management Dump has no village living within it, no women selling food and men bundling up copper wire after burning off the plastic coating. Our dump is invisible. Yet one particularly windy afternoon when I passed by, a collage of colorful trash had formed against the netting.

Corn, Poudre Canyon, 2012. *(opposite page)*
Kipp Wettstein

A bit farther down the road from the dump is the sheep farm. If you have ever smelled the deep odor that results from thousands of pounds of sheep shit, then you simply know. You know that it's not just the smell of shit. It's mud and wet fur, dirty snow, and shit all combined. And when I say deep, I mean it has an alarmingly deep earthiness that seems to hit the back of your brain, but I also mean "deep" in that it can stop you short in some very philosophical way. The smell is so offensive yet fundamentally connected to the food we eat. I get a strange, punishing pleasure from struggling each morning with reconciling those facts. When passing the sheep we give them names, imagining what they say to each other. "Ah, fuck" usually suffices, particularly when they are covered in a thick layer of snow.

Getting that sheep smell out of the car vents takes a while. Next, I turn right on to County Road 33. Even now there remain some fields along CR33 full of stiff brown stalks of corn, their diminutive-looking ears slumped over backwards in raspy husks. We puzzle for a while about why some haven't been harvested, whether they were forgotten or spoiled. My deficient farmland literacy becomes clear as I try to figure out which fields are used for what. I grew up surrounded by agricultural land in Oregon, but this is new terrain. To an outsider, it is American monocrop tedium. An invitation to tune out: there are entire genres of music borne of its visual minimalism.



Livestock along County Road 33.
Emily Brownell

I am not the first new resident to find it boring. In 1871, as Grace Greenwood was traveling westward, her fellow travelers warned her against making a go of it in Greeley.

> You'll die of dulness [sic] in less than five hours. There is nothing there but irrigation. Your host will invite you out to see him irrigate his potato-patch; your hostess will excuse herself to go and irrigate her pinks and dahlias. Every young one has a ditch of his own to manage.

Those potatoes and dahlias are now mostly corn, soybean and sugar beets, which seem even duller to my eyes. But Americans are finally starting to push back against our nutritional tedium that mimics these fields: *corn, corn, soybeans, corn*.

Along this road, each week we see the construction of another fracking installation. The strange huddles of machinery and trucks look like an invading army beginning a winter campaign. They have arrived quickly and in huge numbers. In fact, our university president informed us recently in an email that the mineral rights underneath our campus had been leased for the next five years to a company she described without irony as a "boutique operator" of "horizontal drilling technology." I don't know that I've ever found myself in the midst of a boom environment before, and it is

unsettling how quiet and odorless it all becomes from behind the car window.*

Turning off of CR33 we are close to Greeley but there is still the olfactory *pièce de résistance*. The site that orchestrates much of the economy and fate of this landscape also proves my naiveté in assuming there are no centers and margins in this environmental tedium. The JBS Beef Plant is the center and the margins. The beef plant is the heart of Greeley, if not geographically then in all other ways.

Before I knew anything about Greeley, I knew about its smell. And it certainly played a part in my decision to live in Fort Collins. It is a smell that has seasons and routines and days of the week. It has a life of its own while also being an indicator of the life of the city. And for those who live in the Front Range's less odorous cities, it has also become the easiest way to dismiss Greeley in the least amount of words: "Oh, it smells there." On my first day of class, the students explained that the smell's peaks and valleys correspond to the shifting days of the week when they burn the cattle carcasses. Even if this is more legend than fact, I find myself walking around thinking, *I am smelling burning cattle carcasses right now*.‡

The beef plant has been part of Greeley for a long time, and its biography tells a very American story. The story ends with beef but it starts with sugar beets. It is a story about refugees, cultural marginalia, and putting down roots in far away places. The first wave of refugees to make a go of it in Greeley were German Russians who fled from Alexander II and famine after about 100 years of freedom and prosperity along the Volga river. They poured into North and South America and in particular Kansas, Colorado, Iowa, and Nebraska, where they found work in the burgeoning beet industry. By the mid-eighteenth century in Europe, the beet was discovered as a proficient and cheap stand-in for sugar cane. Sugar beet production in the late

*By March of 2013, Weld County had seen 373 permitted horizontal wells and 964 permitted in 2012 (551 drilled) up from five in 2009. This is in comparison to Larimer county where Fort Collins is located, where only two were permitted in 2012 and none yet in 2013.



Fracking and corn along County Road 33.
Emily Brownell

‡People in Fort Collins also apparently use it to determine that it is about to snow or rain.

If you have ever smelled the deep odor that results from thousands of pounds of sheep shit, then you simply know.

nineteenth and twentieth century has risen and fallen with the vagaries of global sugar cane politics, particularly vulnerable to the United States' tumultuous relationship with Cuba. Yet it has generally been ascendant and northern Colorado, with proper irrigation for the water-intensive crop, became a prime environment for its cultivation. Thus it was these first refugees, familiar with similar types of farming, who established the industry's foothold in Colorado.*

You can still see the mark of this first generation of immigrants between the railroad tracks and the sugar beet factory, east of town. But many of the institutions that were hallmarks of 'little Russia' have since become palimpsests of migrant labor history. The churches now carry new signs, new paint jobs, and new Spanish-speaking worshippers. The neighborhoods are now a mixture of several unique generations of immigrant labor still literally across the tracks from town. Mexican nationals began arriving in the early twentieth century to work the fields, uninvited to become citizens. The New Deal provided a *colonia* for them on the outskirts of town, a cluster of small dark adobe buildings so they could live in close proximity to the fields (and, one would assume, away from the city). The neighborhood still exists, yet only two of the original adobe houses remain standing. The baseball diamond is overgrown.

What connects this history of beet farming to the beef plant is the Monfort family. The modest Monfort farmhouse still stands roughly across the Pan-American Highway from the meatpacking plant. I passed it unknowingly dozens of times before someone pointed out that it was the cradle of the Greeley beef empire. The Monforts moved to Greeley from Illinois in the early twentieth century and transformed their small farm into one of the world's largest beef producers by first shifting their practice of grazing cattle to feeding them in feedlots, particularly after noticing that feeding them sugar beets made the beef taste better. By the 1950s the Monforts realized they could save massive amounts of money for themselves and neighboring farms by slaughtering cows rather than loading them on trains destined for larger Midwestern markets. Sugar beets and corn were rerouted to the stockyards, which for many years simply drained smelly effluent into the Poudre River that ran temptingly close to their fences. And with the stockyards came a slaughterhouse.

The 1960s were the heyday of the Monfort beef plant. Eric Schlosser calls this period one of "compassionate paternalism," led by Kenneth Monfort himself. The beef plant provided some of the best-paying jobs in Greeley. Employees were unionized and received bonuses for late shift work and rewarded based on seniority. Monfort was a liberal democrat, an "outspoken opponent of the Vietnam war" and "one of the two people from Colorado to earn a place on President Nixon's 'enemies list.'" But then he changed, as did the meatpacking industry.

*Until relatively recently, the sugar beet was labor-intensive, each crop's fate bound up in weeding and spacing that can be hard to do any other way than by hand. Sugar beets required "stoop labor," not far from the labor-intensive nature of sugar cane. They are also known to be "water hogs," taking 800 pounds of water to produce one pound of sugar.

‡Strangely enough, when talking about Greeley's history with my family over Christmas, I learned that my uncle, who was a meat buyer for Raley's Grocery store, was once flown to Greeley on the Monfort family's private jet and wined and dined (on what else but a giant steak) at the Monfort family home.

A new, cheaper method of meatpacking slowly infiltrated the Midwestern states in the 1970s. The 'disassembly' line de-skilled labor and had an atavistic effect on the health and safety standards of the meatpacking business. A massive workers' strike in 1979 ended poorly for the workers, who returned after eight weeks with no contracts. Worker unrest continued and the plant closed, reopening again in 1982 without a union. Adjusted for inflation, these workers were earning one third less than what their counterparts had when the plant first opened. It should not be surprising that the population that came to reshape Greeley was migrant labor from south of the border, less able to demand workers' rights and higher wages.

Driving past the plant and into the outskirts of town, the effect of this shift is palpable. Eighth Avenue is a strip of 1960s hotels that look both perennially open and forever closed. Scattered in between is a mish mash of dollar stores, thrift stores, and car repair shops housed in the shells of Greeley's old brick buildings. While the avenue is not the sole geography of Greeley, it indelibly marks your entrance to town from the north. This is the landscape of the low-paid hourly employee.

Currently owned by JBS, a Brazilian corporation that produces more beef and pork than any company in the world, the company is also part of Swift and ConAgra. I frankly can't keep straight which company is nested within which. In 2006 US immigration officials raided the major meat packing plants of Swift and Company scattered throughout the Midwest and over 1,200 illegal immigrants were carted away, leaving a spate of empty chairs all across Greeley schools.



The JBS Beef Plant, Greeley, CO.
Emily Brownell

The raids left the company reluctant to hire Latino workers. So they sought out a different demographic precisely when a strange new one presented itself. Arriving in Emporia, Dodge City, Sioux City, and Greeley, to name a few places, Somali, Eritrean, and Ethiopian refugees trickled in to take up these meat-packing jobs. Word had spread fast among the refugee community because the job required no previous experience.

And here I am led back to Africa. If you look closely on Eighth Avenue on the way to campus, we pass the East African Market, a Halal market with posters in the window advertising cheap international phone cards. I imagine Somalis coming here to the plant, reworking their own fundamental relationship with cattle as a result. Cattle, as is the case in many parts of Africa, are the main currency and source of security for rural Somalis, particularly in the past decades battered by war and famine. For Somalis, cattle offer not only milk and meat, but also grain and other essential commodities.

They hold immense economic and cultural value.

After years of staggering hardship and displacement, these refugees come to a factory where cattle abound. Yet these are disembodied carcasses rather than living beasts. It reminds me of a *New York Times* article about the Somali drought in 2011 that ended with a man named Abdi Farah Hassan commenting wistfully, "I never thought I'd lose all my cattle…I never thought I'd be a refugee." I don't think it would be presumptuous to imagine that those two events for him seemed to be one in the same: losing his cattle was the same as losing his place on earth. Perhaps he is here now, a refugee in a new land of cattle.*

But this current chapter isn't just a story of helpless refugees quietly taking up whatever job and wages that other Americans no longer want to take. They have brought their culture quietly onto the streets and into classrooms, bringing Ramadan and daily prayer onto the floor of the meatpacking plants to the frustration of many, and striking to get prayer breaks when they were revoked.

Greeley seems to represent an antiquated regionalism, yet its labor history also connects it to an immense swath of the globe. This sense is only amplified by reaching even further back to the town's foundation as a utopian society started by Nathan Meeker, the agricultural editor for Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*. Meeker wanted to create a town based on "faith, family, education, irrigation, temperance, agriculture, and home." He recruited for this enterprise with a passionate letter published in the *Tribune* and received over 3,000 responses. People moved to Greeley to get away from somewhere else, to either reclaim an old way of life or seek ways to use their skills in an environment somehow akin to the steppes of Russia, the fields of Mexico, or the cattle culture of Somalia.‡

‡The town is named after the New York newspaper man and reformer, Horace Greeley.

Everything on my commute began to fit together. Yet as a migrant in my own right, I could not draw any conclusions. Was this an example of American thrift and reuse? Or less romantically, just a forgotten place where those on the margins propped up the middle of America? The sugar beet and the cattle and sheep industries flow into one another, like the Ouroboros eating its own tail. Even now when sugar beets are no longer regularly fed to cattle, their crown foliage is mixed with corn fodder and ensiled to make feed while leftover beet pulp is collected for fattening cattle. The old beet factory east of the railroad tracks has now been retrofitted into a factory for the world's largest maker of mozzarella cheese. Meanwhile farmers are nervously eyeing the army of gas men arriving in town, wondering whether the water they have long had protected access to will in the future become food or oil.§

Reuse, overuse, and exploitation have become blurred.



*Another strange coincidence in this story is that one of the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyd Qutb, attended the Colorado State College of Education (what is now the University of Northern Colorado) in the late 1940s. In an article that he published after returning to Egypt, Qutb excoriated American culture as materialist, racist and 'loose.' One wonders what he would think of contemporary Muslim refugees making their life in Greeley's hotbed of sin.

§It is easy to get carried away and start seeing this entire story of this landscape to be really about water allocations but I will resist the temptation. But the issue of farmers and oil men is become more economically stark: In 2012, farmers were paying around $30 an acre foot for water whereas cities were making a healthy profit off of selling water to oil and gas companies for between $1,000 and $2,000 an acre foot.



Sunset, Rocky Mountain National Park.
National Park Service Digital Image Archives

Driving Home

I can't detail my commute through this agricultural pastiche and neglect to describe the turn westward that marks my way home. At this time of year, it happens at just the right time, when the sky is turning the color of melted butter and pink marshmallow Peeps. Turning west means turning to the mountains. As they telescope into my field of vision, all the rest recedes from the frame. Heading towards the mountains from Greeley feels like a salve. The smell recedes, the glimpse of topography excites.

But if we think the mountains are removed from the frame, it is only by willfully turning our heads too far in one direction. We can't so easily separate their histories. Around the same time that sugar beets and Russian Germans were pushing roots down into the soils of the plains, Woodrow Wilson established Rocky Mountain National Park, drawing a boundary between the agricultural feats of man and the sublime feats of nature.

Yet somewhere, tucked into the Rocky Mountains west of Fort Collins is the Never Summer Mountain Range, where you'll find the Grand Ditch. Decades before Wilson drew lines in the mountains, Japanese migrant workers in the 1890s camped out at 10,000 feet and carved out by hand a 14.3 mile ditch in the mountain range. The Grand Ditch diverts water down to the Front Range towns allowing for an 'irrigated Eden' in a place where I haven't seen rain in close to two months.*

*Under the New Deal a second water diversion project to provide water for Front Range agriculture was initiated on the Big Thompson River.

Rebecca Solnit writes about the challenge of reconciling environmental history and human history within the same narrative. She compares the task to those mind-bending images where the wine glass turns into a profile of kissing lovers when you look at it askance: even when you know they are both there, it can still be hard to see them simultaneously. This is also true within environmental history in regards to the beautiful and the ugly. It seems impossible often to find them simultaneously. The discipline has room for both but we seem incapable of capturing them in the same frame unless it's a narrative of declension: something beautiful that we have exploited to the point of ugliness.

To be dulled by the monotony of the endless fields on my commute was to stop looking for the margins. And equally, to see relief in the mountains when they came into view was to disconnect from the rest. I feel as if my commute passes daily over some sort of threshold of American history and environmentalism. A community in so many ways defined by reinvention butting up against land prized for its preservation in perpetuity. Perhaps a noble pairing. Perhaps a striking inequality.

People love visiting Colorado. Nobody visits Greeley. I live here now, winding my way between the mountains and the plains.



Photographic negatives taken by White House photographer David Kennerly in June, 1975.
Courtesy of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

Off the Record

Mattias Fibiger

He snaps a photograph of President Gerald Ford, who leans back in a tall Cabinet Room chair, smoking a pipe and listening intently to CIA Director Colby. The image is the first on the White House Photography Office's 4,527th roll of film for the Ford administration.

The sun beats through the White House's bulletproof glass as Colby offers the CIA's latest appraisal of the whereabouts of the American hostages. Two days ago, on Monday, Ford learned that an American commercial shipping freighter, the S.S. *Mayaguez*, had been assaulted and detained by the Khmer Rouge navy. The crew of forty American civilians had been taken captive and moved to Koh Tang, a meager, elongated island lying about thirty miles off the Cambodian coast. No U.S. military forces were on hand to attempt a rescue, but on Tuesday evening American aircraft spotted a flotilla of two speedboats and one fishing trawler departing Koh Tang. The pilots were able to sink one of the speedboats and force another to turn back. But the fishing trawler continued to ply toward the mainland port city of Kompong Som, unimpeded by warning shots and clouds of tear gas. One of the pilots reported seeing thirty to forty people—possibly Caucasians—in a huddled mass on the trawler's bow.

He takes another photo. "The Cambodians have apparently transported at least some of the American crew from Koh Tang Island to the mainland, putting them ashore at Kompong Som port at about 11:00 last night, Washington time," Colby says. The CIA chief suspects that other hostages remain on Koh Tang.*

Four National Security Council meetings in the past three days, all of them captured on his film. Yesterday's second meeting stretched on till well after midnight. There, the nation's top military and political minds crafted the United States' response to the seizure of the *Mayaguez*. They opted to launch coordinated amphibious assaults against Koh Tang and the *Mayaguez* herself, which rested

*The CIA's estimate of the situation was flawed. All the American hostages had been moved to Kompong Som, and shortly thereafter were moved once again to Koh Rong Sam Lem, another of Cambodia's small coastal islands.

idly nearby. And they decided to pummel Kompong Som with airstrikes. Kissinger, who served as both secretary of state and national security advisor, offered a justification for bombing the mainland: "We should hit targets at Kompong Som and the airfield and say that we are doing it to suppress any supporting action against our operations to regain the ship and seize the island." The members of the Ford administration also hoped that military action directed against Cambodia proper would compel the Khmer Rouge to release any American hostages it had transported to the mainland.

If he had picked up a copy of the *New York Times* that Wednesday morning and glanced at the bottom of the front page, he could have read about "high-ranking Administration sources familiar with military planning" who had "said privately that the seizure of the vessel might provide the test of American determination in Southeast Asia that, they asserted, the United States has viewed as important since the collapse of allied governments in South Vietnam and Cambodia." (Phnom Penh had been taken over by communist forces a month ago, and Saigon had followed suit two weeks later.)

He could have seen truth in the *Times*'s narrative. On Tuesday night, he heard Kissinger affirm the importance of responding to the seizure of the *Mayaguez* in a way that would reestablish the United States' international credibility: "I think we should do something that will impress the Koreans and the Chinese." Ford's counsel, speechwriter, and longtime political aide Bob Hartmann meanwhile focused on the domestic political arena, on the president's personal credibility. "This crisis, like the Cuban missile crisis, is the first real test of your leadership," Hartmann told the president. "We should not just think of what is the right thing to do, but of what the public perceives."



A section of the negative contact sheet for White House Photography Office roll A4527.
Courtesy of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library



A section of the negative contact sheet for White House Photography Office roll A4528A.
Courtesy of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library



Image A4514-6A



Image A4527-19

A selection of individual negatives marked by White House employees for public release from the rolls of film shot by Kennerly on May 13 and 14, 1975.
Courtesy of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

He witnessed another discussion during Tuesday night's NSC meeting. The administration displayed a remarkable degree of unity behind the plan to bomb the Cambodian mainland. But they divided over how to execute that plan. Ford suggested using B-52 bombers stationed in Guam. Secretary of Defense Schlesinger thought it better to use jets based on the aircraft carriers hastening toward the Gulf of Thailand. "The B-52's are a red flag on the Hill," Schlesinger explained. "Moreover, they bomb a very large box and they are not so accurate. They might generate a lot of casualties outside the exact areas that we would want to hit." The meeting adjourned without Ford deciding between the B-52s and the jets on the aircraft carriers.

The camera clicks again. General Jones of the Joint Chiefs has just finished telling Ford that both the B-52s and the carrier jets have been put on alert. Jones awaits the president's orders.

The man behind the lens is not a policymaker—not a Kissinger, a Schlesinger, or a Scowcroft. Lecturing the most powerful men in the world is not included in his job description, and interjecting in the discussion is a fireable offense. But, he thinks, "I can't contain myself. I am almost certainly the only person in the room who has been in Cambodia." He speaks up.*

"Has anyone considered that this might be the act of a local Cambodian commander who has just taken it into his own hands to halt any ship that comes by? Has



A section of the negative contact sheet for White House Photography Office roll A4532.
Courtesy of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

*I have edited Kennerly's recollections to place his thoughts in the present tense. David Hume Kennerly, *Shooter* (New York: Newsweek Books, 1979), pp. 176-177.

The man behind the lens is not a policymaker—not a Kissinger, a Schlesinger, or a Scowcroft.



Image A4529-17A

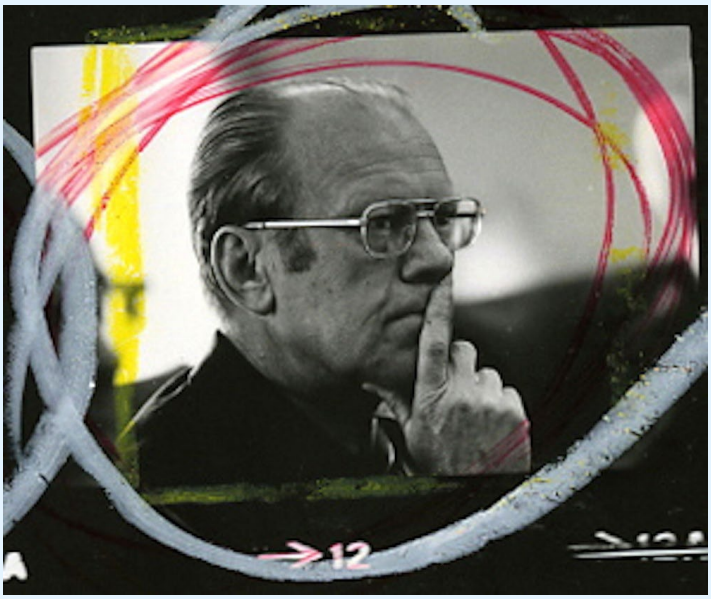


Image A4533-12



Image A4534-11A

A selection of individual negatives marked by White House employees for public release from the rolls of film shot by Kennerly on May 13 and 14, 1975.
Courtesy of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

anyone stopped to think that he might not have gotten his orders from Phnom Penh? If that's what happened, you know, you can blow the whole place away and it's not gonna make any difference. Everyone here has been talking about Cambodia as if it were a traditional government. Like France. We have trouble with France, we just pick up the telephone and call. We know who to talk to. But I was in Cambodia just two weeks ago, and it's not that kind of government at all. We don't even know who the leadership is. Has anyone considered that?"*

Several seconds of silence.

Then Ford orders the planes stationed on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Coral Sea* to carry out the bombing operation. The B-52s should remain on alert, but barring any unforeseen developments they should not be used. "Henry," the president asks, "what do you think?"

"My recommendation is to do it ferociously. We should not just hit mobile targets, but others as well."

The issue decided, the members of the National Security Council move on to other details of crisis management and military planning. They discuss the timing of the attack, the possibility of collateral damage, and the need to consult with Congress.

David Kennerly, the 28-year old White House photographer, raises the camera to his eye and continues taking pictures. His lens, snapping, surveys the room. He is on roll number 4,536. The record will not reflect his comments.‡

*Gerald R. Ford, *A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald R. Ford* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 279-280. A different version of the outburst appears in Kennerly's memoirs: "Has it occurred to anyone that this whole thing may have been the act of one local commander taking matters into his own hands and seizing the ship?" See Kennerly, *Shooter*, 177.



A section of the negative contact sheet for White House Photography Office roll A4536. Courtesy of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

‡By "record" I mean the government's official record of the day's proceedings. The minutes of the NSC meeting do not list Kennerly as a participant or note his contribution to the discussion. Kennerly's outburst is, however, documented in the unofficial record. Both Ford and Kennerly mention it in their memoirs, although they recall it differently. The unofficial record is then both more and less reliable than its official counterpart. Indispensable for the historian, it reveals what the official record tends to elide, including "water cooler" discussions that take place outside of earshot of the designated note-taker, unspoken or unspeakable motivations, and personal conflicts. But because the unofficial record rejects the imperative of standardization, its treasures are always open to question. For the unofficial record of NSC meeting of May 14, 1975 on the *Mayaguez* crisis see, among others, Ford, *A Time to Heal* and Kennerly, *Shooter*. For the official record see "Minutes of National Security Council Meeting," in US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976. Volume X: Vietnam, January 1973-July 1975* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 1021-1036.



Image A4590-9A10



Image A4549-21A

A selection of individual negatives marked by White House employees for public release from the rolls of film shot by Kennerly on May 13 and 14, 1975.
Courtesy of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

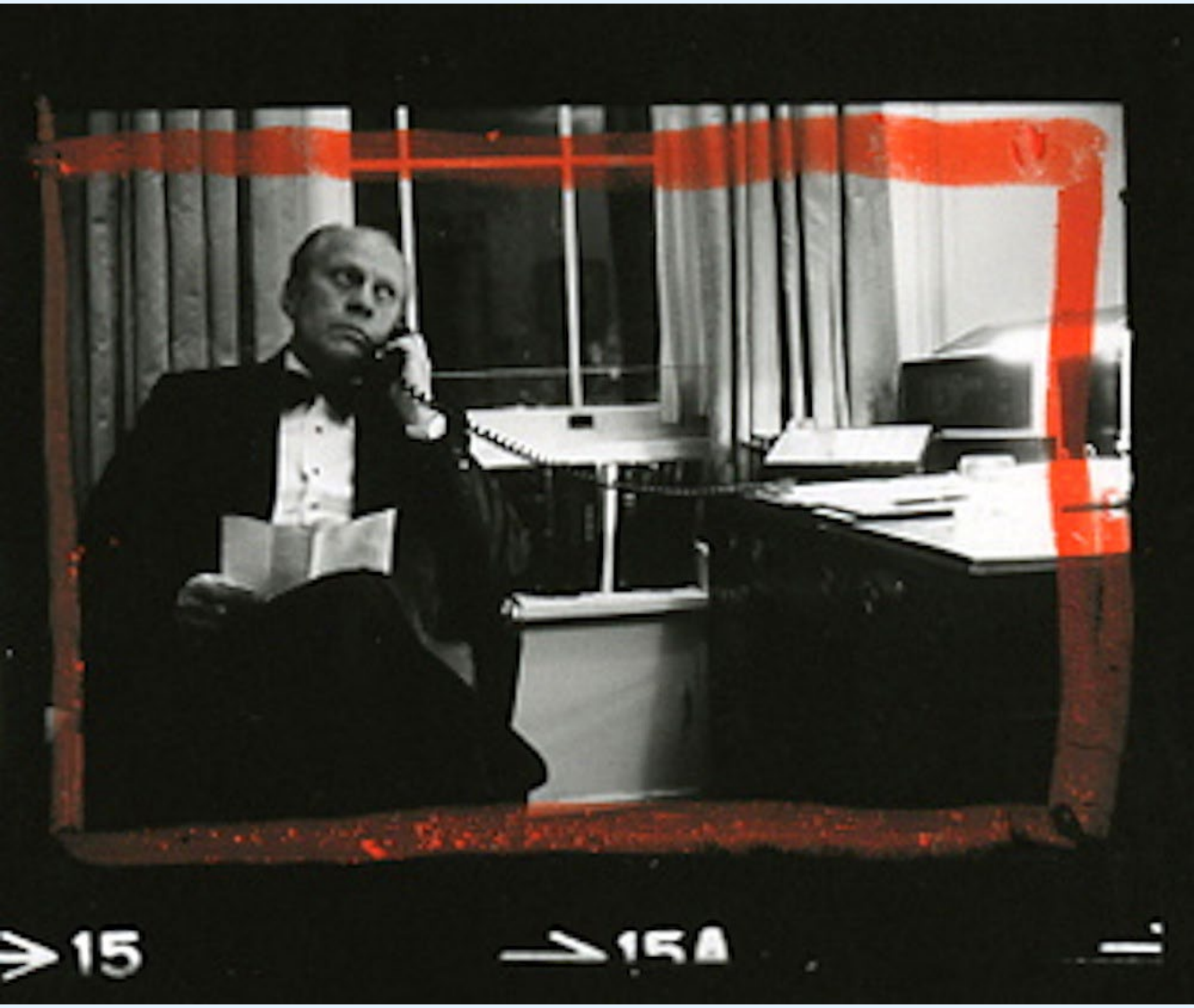


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Death of a Sailor:
Chapter 3: The Locked Room

Christopher Heaney

EDITOR'S NOTE: *While unrequired, you may also read Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of this story in the December 2012 and April 2013 issues of* The Appendix, *respectively.*

The cell door opened.

The murderer stirred.
And the interview began.[1]

Was the prisoner free to move about?
A stout steel ring hugged his ankle, fastened to a heavy chain that bound him to the ground, like a frigate to the ocean floor.

Did he wince at the light? Had he been dreaming of man-bats that leapt over tall prison walls?
His dreams were his own.

But—
But it was early fall, 1835, and the light, still warm, could have glanced off the East River that edged the twenty-acre "Bellevue Establishment." What stray beams reached the interior of Bellevue's prison were always welcome.

Or perhaps it was dark and cold?
Or perhaps it was dark and cold. A thin sailor's mattress, filled with rough straw, kept his warmth from seeping into fathoms of floor.

Describe the cell.
This particular chamber was narrower than the other cells in Bellevue. The prison was nearly twenty years old, a 50-by-150-foot stone pile. It was made up mostly of large rooms that the prison's keeper, Mr. Lyons, kept packed thirty to seventy deep with New York City's guilty and innocent alike. The accused and the witnesses to their asserted crimes were imprisoned together, awaiting the trial in which the former would face down the latter. There were the condemned, and there were also the poor and the vagrant, who taught each other how to survive when they escaped. And last but not least there was also the "vilest and most profane language" New York had to offer, and the illnesses like the dreaded 'jail fever' that would carry away Mr. Lyons himself in a year-and-a-half's time.[*]

*"The arrangement of the Prison is such, that all grades of prisoners from the innocent witness, who for want of the means of giving security for his attendance to testify on the trial of a criminal, is put into confinement; and the apprentice boy sent to jail as a matter of wholesome discipline; to the abandoned reprobate skilled in the acts and mysteries of all crimes, are crowded together in one room to the number varying from 40 to 70; forming a congregation of which the most abandoned reprobate is the minister, and the most innocent, the peculiar objects of his service, and creating and breathing an atmosphere, the pollution and corruption of which as it affects the physical man, is only equalled by the moral pollution and corruption which there affects the moral man." "Document No. 29. Board of Assistant Aldermen, November 24, 1834," *Documents of the Board of Assistants, of the City of New York. Vol. I. From No. 1 to 66, inclusive.—From the 19th May, 1834 to 12th May 1835* (New York: 1835), 231.

But this particular room?
Was only large enough for a single prisoner, and the only thing that might carry away its occupant a few weeks hence was the cart to his execution.

A few years before, a visitor to a similarly condemned man in a similarly apportioned Bellevue room—

Perhaps this very room?
—described the narrow cell "as a living grave."

How does one escape a living grave?
The cell door opened, and another man stood in the doorway.

If it was bright enough to see, what countenance did the visitor present, when the prisoner adjusted to the light?
A serious man, thirty-five years old. About five feet seven inches tall. Garbed in what clothes he could afford on a newspaperman's salary of twelve dollars a week, after supporting wife, daughter, and drinking habit.

His face ink-smudged and gin-blossomed?
"Strongly pitted by smallpox," rather. A childhood illness that had also left him on either side of his sharp, "aquiline" nose with permanently crossed eyes: strabismus. Yet there was "a certain calm, clear *luminousness*" about those eyes. His sometime literary rival Edgar Allen Poe remembered his forehead as "truly beautiful in its intellectuality."

But to the prisoner?
The visitor was 'not a prisoner.'

And did 'not a prisoner' introduce himself?
His name was Richard Adams Locke and he was from England. Born into a rich family, he hadn't inherited his father's estate, having become a journalist who railed against aristocratic privilege and anti-Catholicism. In 1831 he had moved his family to America, where the publisher of the *New York Sun* had hired him to be the pioneering penny-paper's editor. Locke had since tried to convince the *Sun*'s readers that America's two million slaves deserved freedom. In 1834, he had watched his birthplace, England, abolish slavery throughout its empire while white mobs in his adopted city looted the homes and churches of black New Yorkers. This past summer, the summer of 1835, he had defended American abolitionists threatened with death and lynching, and made his most full-throated condemnation of slavery yet.*

Was that why he was New York's most infamous journalist that fall?
No. It was not. He was New York's most infamous journalist that fall because he had authored the *Sun*'s great moon hoax of 1835.

In a series of articles, the *Sun* had 'revealed' that Earth's lunar satellite was populated by man-bats, unicorns, and other fantastical creatures. Locke's creation may have been a failed satire of religious astronomers who predicted life beyond the stars, or a very subtle diversion from the tension over abolition, but it had landed as pseudo-scientific revelation. It was too good not to be believed. Debunked in New York, the story was now winging its way across the Atlantic, where European newspapers would further its flight. Richard Adams Locke had tricked the world, whether he had meant to or not.

*As in the previous chapter, I am indebted to Goodman, *The Sun and the Moon* for his biography of Locke, pp. 49-62.

Did the Sun's readers still trust him as a journalist?
Through the moon hoax, the Sun had become the most-read newspaper in New York by the widest of margins. And Locke needed his next story.

All this he explained to the prisoner?
Richard Adams Locke stepped inside. The door closed behind him.

Did the prisoner stir? Who was he?
That was what Locke was here to find out.



Did the journalist know the prisoner?
Not personally, but by sight, yes. The last time Locke had seen the prisoner, the latter had been on trial for the murder of John "Little Jack" Roberts.

What was the prisoner's name?
Richard C. Jackson.

But had he been born Richard Jackson?
The prisoner had been a sailor.

But was he born a sailor?
The prisoner spoke with a foreign accent.

But had he always been 'foreign'?
He had not.

Describe him. What countenance did the prisoner present?
Locke had seen the accused at the trial, but only from a distance. Now, he was able to study the condemned close up, finding him "a man below the middle stature, of a slight but apparently agile frame, and a swarthy weather-beaten countenance. His cheek bones were broad and high, and his eyebrows were dark and heavy; but the expression of his eyes were rather humorous than ferocious, notwithstanding the shade of care which bedimmed them."

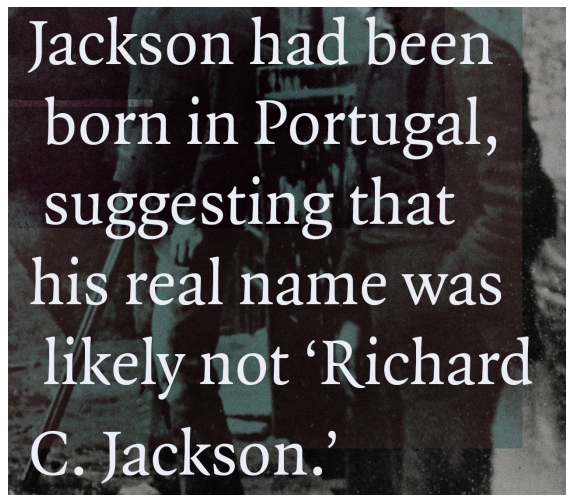
Did he look like a murderer?
He looked like a sailor accused, convicted, and condemned to die. Weathered driftwood ready for the pyre.

Did Locke fear the murderer?
It is unclear. Locke, who had learned shorthand in order to cover trials like Jackson's, had furiously transcribed the witnesses' clear-cut testimony, and the fragile defense that Jackson's lawyer attempted to shroud him with, cobweb-like. The lawyer had claimed that Jackson had indeed shot John "Little Jack" Roberts, but he had been moved to do so not from jealousy of Roberts's relationship with Mrs. Harriet Shoults. Rather, because he was insane. After his arrest, when he had tried to hang himself with his handkerchief, it was out of madness—not guilt or despair.

Or so the lawyer claimed. Did the argument succeed?
It failed, and Jackson was condemned to death.

But still, the journalist Locke was moved by the lawyer's attempt. After the trial he worried over two seemingly extraneous facts that the trial had revealed, and that hinted at the story behind Jackson's story.

What 'facts' were those?
That Jackson had been born in Portugal, suggesting that his real name was likely not 'Richard C. Jackson.' And that he had been tried in Boston, once, for piracy.



A pirate, tried in 1830s America, under a false name, condemned to die. Was that rare?

As such, Jackson was the last of his kind, almost. Four years before, in 1831, Charles Gibbs, a white Rhode Islander, and Thomas J. Wansley, a mulatto from Delaware, had been hanged at Ellis Island for commandeering a silver-loaded brig, the *Vineyard*, and killing its captain and first mate. They had wrecked the vessel off the coast of Long Island, losing most of the treasure. Jeffers and Wansley were caught, sentenced—Wansley accused the court of racism— and sent to the gallows, among the last men America executed for piracy.*

But to the journalist Locke, Gibbs was as famous for what he hadn't done as what he had. Before Gibbs was hanged he had given interviews from his own "living grave" of a cell at Bellevue in which he claimed to have authored acts of piracy and murder of such number and violence that, if true, would have rivaled those of the dread pirate Blackbeard. Born James D. Jeffers in 1798, Gibbs had changed his name and gone off to sea. He claimed to have become one of the last pirates of the Caribbean, taking advantage of Spain's shrinking presence in the Caribbean to maraud vessels off the coast of Cuba, Colombia, and later Argentina. He had killed many, he said, including a woman he may have loved. He confessed to so many acts of violence and piracy that journalists and readers alike decided that he was exaggerating—but that his stories were entertaining, nonetheless. Newspapers were sold.

But were those stories true?

In their broadest of strokes—perhaps. In their details—perhaps not. It depends on how we define 'true.' If Gibbs was telling *a* truth, then he would have lived a life that left little trace. Piracy in the Caribbean was on the wane, and he could hardly have found his companions—if they survived—to vouchsafe his tale. And even if Gibbs hadn't done all that he claimed, then he at least was producing himself as an ersatz culprit for the true, collective crimes of his fellow final pirates of the Caribbean, who were now shuffling into the fringes of the fraying Atlantic World.

In Richard Jackson, who was not Richard Jackson, who had been born in Portugal, then, had Locke found his Gibbs?

After the murder trial, news of Jackson's own supposed pirate past had begun to circulate. He was soon rumored to have been "a sublimely atrocious pirate," wrote Locke, "and of course, connected with Gibbs and Wansley, who were executed a few years since; if not, indeed, with the renowned Barbarossas, Horuc and Hayradin, who were the terror of the Mediterranean, three hundred years ago."

And was that enough for Locke?

Locke would not have entered Bellevue's high stone walls on that wild intelligence alone, he claimed. He said that he had been called.

By whom?

By the prisoner himself.



*This paragraph and the paragraph following are drawn from the following straight-forward, entertaining but somewhat uncritical attempt to sort out the tales of Gibbs—born James Jeffers (1798-1831): Joseph Gibbs, *Dead Men Tell No Tales: The Lives and Legends of the Pirate Charles Gibbs* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007).

On what pasts does a convicted killer dwell?
As Locke wrote later, in his typically florid style, Jackson, hopeless in "the solitude of his gloomy dungeon," had retraced his life. He wanted someone to tell his story—to "make known to the world, the chief incidents of a life not less distinguished by remarkable adventures and sufferings, than by the ignominy which would seal its close."*

Did he feel remorse?
"He naturally wished that some personal relic might reach the strand, which might, perchance, awaken some sympathy among his fellow-men with his sufferings as a man, to mitigate, if possible, the dark opprobrium of guilt which surrounds his name. So enduring is the social principle in the human breast, that it is rarely extinguished, even in those the most deeply stained with crime ..." And in Jackson's heart, "it was strong even to peculiarity."[2]

But did he regret the crime he had committed? Why had he killed John "Little Jack" Roberts?
That truth would take time to unfold.

Truth? Was Locke prepared to believe him?
Given Jackson's rumored association with Gibbs—not at first, no. Locke sought "the gloomy cell of the unhappy sailor" expecting that he was about to reveal an elaborately scrimshawed career of crime. Locke was prepared to tell his readers to swallow Jackson's "marine monstrosities...*cum grano salis*—that is, with a grain or two of their native salt."

But what happened instead?
Bellevue's keeper, Mr. Lyons, had made Locke promise neither to help the prisoner escape, or commit suicide. Lyons now locked the door behind the journalist. The accused hoaxer began the interview, and the convicted murderer began to speak.

On what pasts does a convicted killer dwell?

*James Gordon Bennett, famed founder of the *Morning Herald*, and rival editor of Locke said of the *Sun*'s editor the journalist in question: "He was a little too gorgeous and florid in his descriptions of police scenes ... but otherwise showed learning and science, although out of place." Matthew Goodman, *The Sun and the Moon: The Remarkable True Account of Hoaxers, Showmen, Dueling Journalists, and Lunar Man-Bats in the Nineteenth-Century New York* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 71-72.

How long did they talk?
The words swam up from the sailor's mouth, and Locke tried to haul them in as quickly as he could. Writing in his shorthand, he chronicled the life of a man he had never known free. At first, he thought it would be a short engagement. But a day passed, and then a week. Finally, Locke would be "the lone companion of a murderer whose days were numbered" for nearly a month. Daily, for three full weeks, while still publishing a newspaper, while enduring whispers that he was drinking too much, Locke made the time to ride north and spend several hours a day with Jackson.

Locke had learned that Jackson's story, from birth to death, contained far more chapters than the one that had brought him to this living grave in Bellevue. His life was one of romance, war, and injustice: kidnapping, sea battles, mutiny, and, yes, piracy, ranging from the Mediterranean to the Caribbean and South America, from China to New Orleans, from London to New York. There were secret lovers and hidden identities. Throughout, there was slavery—the bondage and torture inflicted upon Jackson as a sailor, and the slavery he inflicted on others for pay. And then there was the murder that brought him to his chains, and this last foul prison cell.

Did he do it?
The prisoner would reveal all, hoping for absolution.

How do we know what he said?
As Jackson told it, it was a life as epic, exciting, and awful as the Atlantic age of sail and slavery now ending—the life not of a great man, the usual stuff of history, but that of an unsung antihero, who'd otherwise be forgotten. And Locke had an exclusive. When he was through he had enough for ten installments, or chapters, that the *New York Sun* began to publish on November 14, and would continue to publish, right up until the day of Jackson's scheduled execution. Like the moon hoax, the serialized chapters were compiled as a book and sold to the *Sun*'s readers. Locke claimed he had had to edit it down, for brevity's sake—but at 22,000 words, it still surpassed the moon hoax for length.

Locke knew that drawing out Jackson's story as exceptional lifted the sailor up for attention usually not afforded men of his class. Jackson was no 'great man,' and he hadn't lived a life that yielded "many of those moral and intellectual illustrations of character which abound in the biography of persons less exclusively and peculiarly associated." But in his life, with its flight from ships, where he was the "slave of imperative authority," and from land, where he was enslaved by his passions, Locke found something deeply human and worth understanding. The ocean was Jackson's refuge, even as it had robbed him of what he held most dear.

For "heroism in thrilling perils," wrote Locke, "for patient endurance of hardship, and for desperate enterprise, what narrative can compare with that of a sailor who has encountered the storms of every latitude and the dangers of every shore?"

But what of those thrilling perils could we possibly trust? A convicted murderer tells his story to a confessed hoaxer behind a locked door, with no witnesses. What room is there, in such a room, for anything believable?
Locke claimed to trust Jackson entirely; he ran down Jackson's creativity, his imagination; and suggested that he had confirmed several of Jackson's more "remarkable occurrences" with his own "recollections and reading." Jackson, Locke claimed, was illiterate, and thus unable to embellish his tales with others. Instead, the sailor "relied entirely upon the retrospection of a memory more vivid, perhaps, in the solitary gloom of his dungeon than at another period of his life."

Illiteracy as honesty? Then where did that leave Locke?
"For ourselves, we have added neither incident nor tint to the tale, for we found it so crowded with interesting facts, as to render fictitious embellishment not only unnecessary but inconvenient. We have of course related it in our own language, for the imperfect English of the uneducated foreigner made this unavoidable; but this comprises the whole of our claim to its authorship."

What of that "uneducated foreigner" did Locke retain?
A voice that could lie and tell truths, in equal measure; a voice "weak and plaintive," one that still can be heard.

Exaggerations. Violence to the historical record.
And facts. Possible to confirm.

Was it fiction? Or chronicle?
It was something more powerful, hulking in between. A mystery to confound.

Who was Jackson really, then?
His name was Manuel Fernandes.

He was born on March 16th, 1800, at Coimbra, Portugal.

He was the son of a soldier.

This, Locke wrote, was his story.

Or perhaps not.

Notes

1. This chapter's narration, description of the setting, and the people involved, if not flagged otherwise, draws entirely from *Richard Adams Locke, The Life and Adventures of Manuel Fernandez, Otherwise Richard C. Jackson, Convicted for the Murder of John Roberts, and Executed at the Bellevue Prison, New York, on Thursday, the 13th of November, 1835* (New York: New York Sun, 1835). However untrustworthy the majority of the source may at first seem, it can be surmised that it at least grew from a nut of truth: that a journalist visited a murderer in his prison cell and learned about his life.

2. For this quote, and all quotes in paragraphs following, see Locke, *The Life and Adventures of Manuel Fernandez*, pp. 1-2.



White Nights

Maya Koretzky

"I wish I had lived in the Soviet Union," Nastya says. We are sitting on the banks of the canal, eating the chocolates that she brought.

"Why?" I ask.

"I don't know. I just do. To have experienced it…"

"Do you think you would have liked it?"

"Probably not." Nastya looks wistful and doesn't say more.

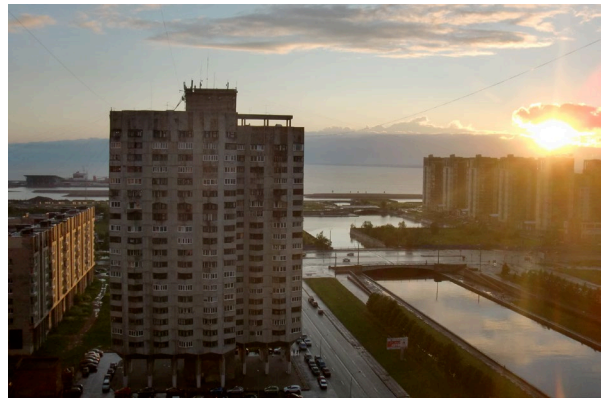
"It was a miraculous night, the sort of night that can only occur when you are young."

This sentence opens the novella *White Nights*, which Dostoevsky wrote in 1848 when he was still the "sentimental dreamer" from whose memoirs it is supposedly taken. Years later, after a long stint in Siberia, he returned to Petersburg and wrote the memoirs of the Underground Man, a very different kind of dreamer. The dark, ugly, stinking Petersburg of *Notes from Underground* is nothing like the Petersburg of *White Nights*, but they are nevertheless the same city. Petersburg is a state of mind, a geographical space that can be the best or the worst place on the earth depending on the season and your mood. In the words of the Underground Man, it is at once "the most abstract and intentional city in the world."

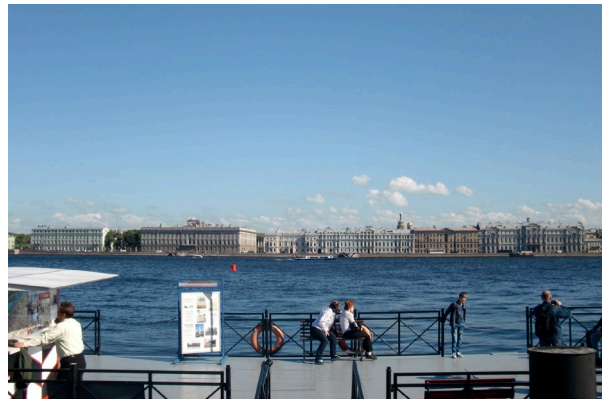
The image above is the view from the stairwell of 6 Novosmolenskaya Naberezhnaya at 11pm.

Everything in Petersburg is in stasis. It exists in the blue time of twilight at midnight, the sun skirting the sky but never setting or rising. Everything is perpetually breaking down, but not quite broken. Walter Benjamin, when he visited Moscow in the 1920s, wrote that *remont* was everywhere. But Petersburg now is not in remont so much as it is in abandonment, like the workers left one day for their lunch break and never came back. Abandoned factories with smashed-out windows line the streets of Vasilevsky Island. The apartment buildings in this section of the city, where the tourists never go, are all Brezhnev-era concrete monstrosities. At night, more than half the windows are dark. During the day, you can see the gaping holes of broken windows and graffiti in ugly colors. Weeds and gangly trees grow amongst rebar and crumbled concrete in the abandoned lots between buildings.*

This Soviet city is only two metro stops from the comfortably European Nevsky Prospekt, Hermitage, and summer garden. But this, too, is Petersburg. The impression is of a city built for giants, not humans. The scale of the buildings is fantastic. Each high rise is huge. A narrow, superbly straight canal bisects the island cleanly, running out to the Gulf of Finland. The giants who were supposed to live here never came. The new kind of man for whom these buildings were constructed never materialized. But the entire city still feels like it is waiting, which is another kind of stasis. And while they wait in the perpetual twilight, Petersburg's entirely human inhabitants laugh and talk and smoke, play music on the banks of the canal, hang their laundry out of the windows. They are squatters, homeless people in this city of giants, but they live and keep on living and are not alone.



Midnight sun over the Gulf of Finland.
Maya Koretzky



Iconic Petersburg. Tourists and locals alike gaze across the river from the Neva Gate of the Peter Paul fortress ot the Palace Embankment on the othe side.
Maya Koretzky

*The construction of Saint Petersburg has a fascinating history. As Dostoevsky's Underground Man notes, Petersburg was built virtually overnight because of the will of one man, Peter the Great. The building of Petersburg was notoriously difficult—a vast number of serfs died digging the canals and laying the foundations that transformed swampy islands into habitable land. The city continued to expand after it was founded in the early 1700s. The construction of a canal bisecting the western half of Vasilevsky Island in the mid-twentieth century made it possible to start development in this sector of the city.

Remont is a Russian word meaning "renovation," but with a much wider usage than the English equivalent. For example, signs cautioning pedestrians about road work or building repairs use this word. Walter Benjamin comments on the usage of this word in *Moscow Diary* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986).

Only two of the four elevators in my building ever work at once, and day-to-day it is never the same two. I live in constant



Looking out over the Smolenka Canal from the twenty-first floor of 6 Novosmolenskaya Naberezhnaya.
Maya Koretzky

fear of getting stuck in one of them, or plummeting to my doom. The view of the Gulf of Finland from the twenty-first floor of my high rise is stunning, but not worth the approximately eleven seconds of terror as the elevators rattle and stutter alarmingly up and down decaying concrete shafts. You can do a lot in eleven seconds. It is certainly enough time to think about the unfinished thesis you'll be leaving behind, to plan your obituary, to imagine the student newspaper calling up your advisor and asking her about you. "Maya was a wonderful student," she would say. "But she should have taken the stairs."

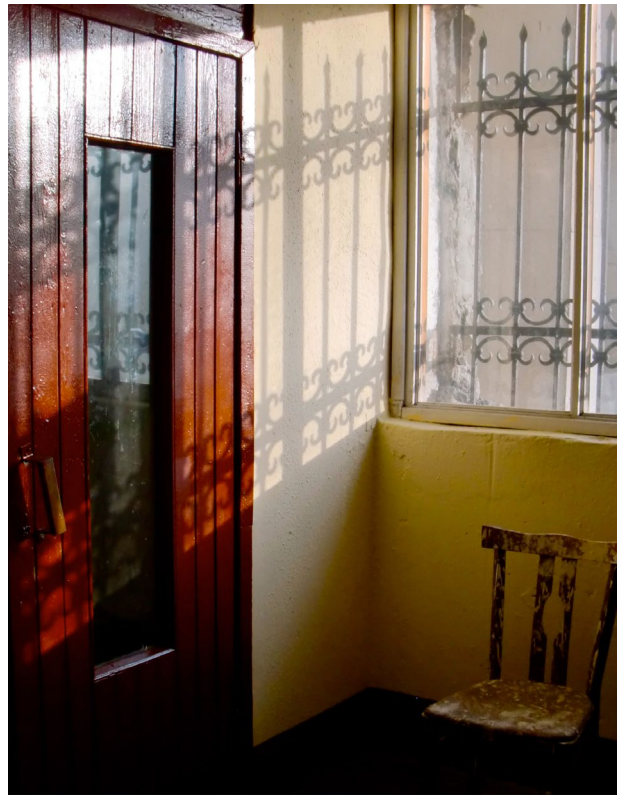
When the elevators become unbearable, I really do try taking the stairs. I give that up after seeing the rusted through railings on the inside, nothing to prevent a twenty-one-story fall onto hard concrete and broken glass. It wouldn't be a problem, except that there are no lights on the stairs, so if the doors to the landings are closed, the entire stairwell is pitch black. You have to edge down, back to the wall, moving step by step and hoping not to encounter anything particularly sharp, like the used needles on the twelfth floor, or particularly squishy, like the pile of evidently human shit on the seventh floor. No, the stairs are not an option.

Each trip up to my apartment is an exercise in faith, and perhaps that is not a bad thing. Living in a country where the letters look like they are written backwards (even after four years of studying the language), where the only thing that runs on time is the metro, where I stand out every time I open my mouth, is an exercise in faith. You have to give up control over the things you can't change, you have to learn to live in the electric space of chance. In Russian, the word for lucky, *schastlivi*, is the same as the word for happy. I am truly alive in the eleven seconds of travel in the elevator. I listen to my breathing and hear the pulleys squeak. And each time the door slams open and I'm safely on a solid floor I am schastlivi.



At the university, I have intensive Russian class every day from 9am until 3pm with three other American students. Even though we are forced to speak Russian in class, it is ironically the most American of my Russian experiences. In class we repeat phrases and conjugate verbs while heat shimmers past the open windows and our teachers fan themselves with the textbooks. When the teachers leave the room, we complain to each other in whispered, illicit English about the difficulties of taking the bus and the long walk from the metro station to the university. At lunch, the American students sit together in the university cafeteria and sneak English words into broken conversations in Russian.

One day at lunch, I sit with a group of Russian students who have been assigned to our program as language tutors. This is how I meet Kolya, Polya, and Nastya. Through them, I meet Pasha and Kisenia. They get my phone number the first day, then start inviting me everywhere. We go to *Novaya Gollandiya*, an island in the middle of the city where we have picnic dinners and listen to music. We visit the Peter-Paul Fortress, once the most feared prison in Tsarist Russia, now a public park where young Russians stroll hand in hand. At a tiny café on the roof of a condemned building-turned art gallery, Pasha destroys me in a game of chess in less than five moves. And at the university, I no longer speak English at lunch.



Early morning sun casts shadows above a paint-splattered chair left in the stairwell of 6 Novosmolenskaya Naberezhnaya.
Maya Koretzky

One weekend, on impulse, I take the train to Moscow with two other American students. As it turns out, taking the train in Russia is an experience in itself, and one to which our day in Moscow hardly compares. On the train there, we speak in English and get dirty looks from the people next to us. We switch to Russian and immediately the girl in the bunk next to me introduces herself. *Babushki* offer us strawberries, which we accept. It's like opening up the door to a whole new world, like taking apart the tower of Babel brick by brick. We are on the provincial train, because it is cheaper. This is the train that goes all the way through to the Urals, and the Urals are where most of our companions are headed. They tell us stories of dusty villages in the summer, of old grandparents they are going to visit, of students coming home for break.

On the train back, we meet Sergei, who is from Moscow but headed to Petersburg to help his girlfriend repaint her apartment. He is desperate to talk in English, and keeps asking me about conjugations. His English is terrible, but we speak in it anyway. I have a bottle of cheap vodka. He has a homemade dinner. We put our



Vasilevsky Island's buried past. Leaning crosses line a pathway in the overgrown Lutheran cemetery by the Smolenka river. Both the Luthern cemetery and the island's larger, better-kept, Orthodox cemetery have been in use for over two centuries.
Maya Koretzky

The geography of Petersburg is acutely temporal as well as spatial, but the years are condensed, layered, and buried.

offerings on the table and split them. Later on, the train rumbles past Lake Ladoga, where fishermen fish in the 4 am twilight and where, in the terrible winters of 1941-44, supply trucks cut their way across the ice in an effort to stem rampant starvation in blockaded Petersburg. "We has more soul than other people," Sergei tells me. "We have," I correct his grammar absently, but I think I know what he means anyway.

The train rolls into Petersburg before sunrise and Sergei and I get on the metro in different directions. I ride half asleep until the metro line ends at my stop, the last stop before island turns to water and Finland is visible on the horizon. I emerge, rubbing my eyes, into a transformed city. While I was hurtling through the dark tunnels below the Neva, somewhere above dawn broke in earnest on Petersburg. The entire city is tinged in gold, it glitters on the canal, fills the stairwell of my building from the ground floor up, breaking past the bars on the first floor window. The change is shocking and surprisingly affecting. It's no red dawn, but it feels like the start of a wondrous new world all the same.

Whispered conversations behind padded doors, romantic trysts in the open-air privacy of stairwells, long lines for information on political prisoners, which become long lines for food, which become long lines for blue jeans—all this is a cultural heritage which I am not heir to, no matter how much I might wish it, no matter how much I try to understand it. I try to imagine myself walking home in 1949, '59, '69. In the archives, the old newspapers crackle as I go back



Sunrise over the Smolenka Canal.
Maya Koretzky

even farther. I read about a wedding that happened across the road one hundred and forty years ago, about a scandal that erupted on Nevsky Prospekt just down the street and two hundred years in the past. The geography of Petersburg is acutely temporal as well as spatial, but the years are condensed, layered, and buried. It takes a particular kind of gaze to begin to see the nineteenth century underneath the twentieth.

This buried time is literal as well as metaphorical. Petersburg may be built on a swamp, but the houses of Vasilevsky Island are built on a graveyard. Before the city expanded, before the canal system improved, it was the city's biggest cemetery, and it is the place where the graves of the Tsar's opponents lie unmarked and unnamed. The very edge of Vasilevsky Island was once *Smolenskoe Pole*, the execution grounds for state criminals. The Decembrists, an aristocratic group of revolutionaries, were killed and buried here in the 1820s. The five infamous members of the People's Will, the group of terrorists who killed Alexander II, lie here too, somewhere beneath the concrete foundations of the 1950s high rises, or perhaps along the weedy banks of the canal. Walking home very early in the morning, when it is well and truly dark for the first time in weeks, I can almost feel their breath on the back of my neck. I wonder what they would think of their bones mixing with the concrete dust of the Soviet state.

My last day in Petersburg, I visit a *banya* with one of my American friends. Traditional Russian bathhouses are a common tourist attraction, and we

are both a bit skeptical. But, we quickly realize that the particular banya we have selected is not for tourists. As we are changing in the broken-tile, grim-looking locker rooms, the banya attendant rushes up to us and says with gleeful officiousness, "Girls, bathing suits are forbidden!" Pleading is no use. There is nothing for it but to strip or walk out. My friend and I glance at one another and try not to laugh. Why not? I take off the last few layers.

The main room of the banya is tiled in grimy white squares, floor to ceiling. There are rusted spigots with cold water and greening showerheads with warm water. There is a small, raised pool in one corner and a door that leads through to a sauna in the other. All of the other women are far older than we are—grandmothers, with sagging flesh and wrinkled bodies. In the sauna, I find myself answering their questions—about America, my family, what brings me to Petersburg—with a fluency that surprises me. I have never spoken Russian better. Then it dawns on me. The worst has already happened. I am speaking in a different language to strangers, while covered in sweat and totally naked. This is the stuff of Russian class anxiety nightmares. It is strangely freeing.

This is the most naked I have been in years. Maybe it is the most naked I have been ever. I am unprepared for the extent of my nakedness, but I am also unprepared for how comfortable I feel in my skin. I dive into the cold pool after the sauna. One of the grandmothers asks me to rub coffee grinds into her back under the shower to exfoliate her skin. In return she does the same for me. I can almost feel the dead skin peeling away from my body. The feeling is cathartic and bittersweet. My plane leaves in less than twelve hours. It feels like Russia is being stripped away from me, layer by layer. But, as I lie floating once again in the pool, pink and new, I'm not sure what exactly is left behind.



"I wish I had lived in the Soviet Union," Nastya says. We are sitting on the banks of the canal, eating the chocolates that she brought as a goodbye present after the last day of class.

"Do you think you would have liked it?"

"Probably not." Nastya looks wistful and doesn't say more. In the distance, someone is strumming a guitar and singing, but the words and tune are indistinct. Old men stand on the banks of the canal and smoke in striped sailor's undershirts. A couple walks by holding hands.

"Did I tell you," Nastya says, "I've applied to study in America?"



Europeans and indigenous Americans being judged at the court of Nature for modifying their bodies, from the frontispiece to John Bulwer's *Antrhopometamorphosis* (London, 1656). Wikimedia Commons

Indelible Ink:
The Deep History of Tattoo Removal

Mairin Odle

In 1681, after several months of raids on Spanish settlements, a group of English pirates traipsed across Panama on their way to the Atlantic. An accident involving gunpowder had left the buccaneers' surgeon, Lionel Wafer, too injured to walk with the others, and he was subsequently left behind somewhere in Darién. Staying with the region's Kuna people while waiting for his leg to heal, Wafer noted his hosts' "delight" in decorating their bodies both with temporary paint and with "finer figures ... imprinted deeper" into the skin. These latter figures, he wrote, were first sketched on the skin, "then they prick all over with a sharp Thorn till the Blood gushes out; then they rub the place with their Hands, first dipp'd in the Colour they design; and the Picture so made is indelible." Wafer himself was painted by the Kuna, but either declined to be tattooed or was not offered the opportunity.

One of his companions, however, received "one of these imprinted Pictures" and then "desired" Wafer, perhaps with a hint of desperation, to get it "out of his Cheek." Wafer's best efforts as a doctor and surgeon made little difference, however: "I could not effectually" remove it, he reported, even "after much scarifying and fetching off a great part of the Skin."

The growing ubiquity of the tattoo in contemporary culture (21% of the U.S. population now has at least one tattoo, according to a 2012 survey) has diluted some of the shock and fascination such markings used to generate. But an even greater factor behind the diminished reaction to modern tattoos may be the ready avail-

ability of effective removal procedures. With a whole industry standing by to correct tattoo regret, getting inked now might seem to many only a semi-permanent body modification.*

While these contemporary laser removal techniques are only around forty years old, efforts to erase or rewrite tattoos are much, much older. One of the earliest written descriptions of a procedure can be found in the *Tetrabiblon*, a sixth-century encyclopedia of medicine written by a doctor named Aetius, who practiced in Alexandria and Constantinople. He wrote:

> They call stigmata things inscribed on the face or some other part of the body, for example on the hands of soldiers ... In cases where we wish to remove such stigmata, we must use the following preparations ... When applying, first clean the stigmata with niter, smear them with resin of terebinth, and bandage for five days ... The stigmata are removed in twenty days, without great ulceration and without a scar.

*The American Society for Dermatological Surgeons has reported on the rapid increase of laser tattoo removal procedures, with its members performing an estimated 100,000 removals in 2011.



"Souase Oke Charinga, Americanischer printz," in David Richter, *Sammlung von natur- und Medicin- wie auch hierzu gehörigen Kunst- und Literatur-Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1722).
The John Carter Brown Library at Brown University

In the Mediterranean world of Aetius's era, those most likely to be tattooed were soldiers—marked by the state with the number of their unit, as a preventative measure against desertions—and slaves who were tattooed either for the crimes that had resulted in their enslavement or as punishment for misbehavior (common tattooed phrases included 'Stop me, I'm a runaway'). While there were also sacred tattoos throughout the Mediterranean, intended to mark their bearers as devotees of particular gods, many tattoos marked control by a human master: something that might have made former soldiers and slaves eager clients of Aetius.

By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, documentation of tattoo removal was often found in accounts of Europeans in contact with cultures overseas—particularly, although not exclusively, societies in the New World. The failed effort to remove the English pirate's facial tattoo was not the only attempt at such a procedure in the early modern Atlantic world. A number of French, Spanish, English, and Native American sources suggest that people of the period could regret their permanent body modifications just as much as modern people do.

Tattoo removal in the past, however, reflected something more powerful than transient personal taste. Attempts to undo seemingly permanent body modification remind us how much the cultural aspects of physical appearance mattered, particularly in determining personal and collective identities. Inks and dyes, fixed under the skin, told stories about one's past: who one knew, where one had been, even who one had been. One might wish, or others might insist, that such

stories be ignored, forgotten, erased. This is the underexplored side to the history of body modification: regret, resentment, and painful policing of aesthetic and social boundaries.

Put another way, a tattoo could stamp such strong social or cultural affinities that it needed to be scrubbed from the body's record.



1698, Brest, France: Interrogation notes outline a conversation between an Intendant Desclouzeaux and two brothers, Pierre and Jean-Baptiste Talon. The tattoos upon the Talons' bodies were one of the topics of discussion.

A remarkable set of journeys had brought the Talons back to France, which they had left fourteen years earlier as members of the final, disastrous La Salle expedition. They were young children when their parents had joined the venture, which was intended to locate the mouth of the Mississippi and then establish a colony some distance inland. Failing to spot the river, the expedition dissolved in the wake of La Salle's assassination by some of his own disgruntled colonists and an attack by Karankawas on the expedition's settlement at Fort St. Louis. Pierre and Jean-Baptiste, along with their three siblings, were some of the group's only survivors.

Pierre was taken in by the Hasinai, another local Native American community, while Jean-Baptiste and the other children were adopted by Karankawas. A few years later, Spanish parties searching for evidence of their French rivals found the Talon children, and they were taken to Mexico City, where they became servants in the viceroy's household. The oldest brothers then entered into Spanish military service until the ship they served on was captured by the French. Surprised to find survivors from La Salle's voyage on a Spanish ship, French officers escorted the brothers to France, questioning them closely about the lands along the Gulf Coast, the Indian societies they had lived among, and what Spanish intentions toward the area were.*

The report said little about how the siblings looked after years living in coastal Indian communities and then in New Spain, except for this:

> the said Talons ... fell into the power of the savages, who first tattooed them on the face, the hands, the arms, and in several other places on their bodies as they do on themselves, with several bizarre black marks ... These marks still show, despite a hundred remedies that the Spaniards applied to try to erase them.‡

There are no portraits of the Talons, nor any more detailed accounts of their "bizarre black marks," but we can get an idea of their appearance from a 1687 description of another Gulf Coast castaway. Enríquez Barroto, one of the Spanish captains searching the coast for the French 'interlopers,' had instead found a Spanish child named Nicolás de Vargas liv-

*A handful of French adults, some of whom were deserters from La Salle's previous expedition, were also found by Spanish expeditions living among the Indian nations of the Gulf Coast and were tattooed in a similar fashion to the Talons.

‡"Tattooed" is an anachronism in the translation. Deriving from the Tahitian 'tatau,' the word 'tattoo' didn't enter European languages until accounts of the Cook expeditions to the Pacific were published in 1769. The original, as quoted in Pierre Margry, ed., *Découvertes et Etablissements des François dans l'Ouest et le Sud de l'Amérique Septentrionale* (Paris: D. Jouaust, 1879-88) is: '... des Sauvages, qui les marquent d'abord au visage, aux mains, aux bras et à plusieurs autres endroits de leurs corps, comme ils le sont eux-mesmes de plusieurs marques noires et bizarres ... des marques leur paroissent toujours, malgré cent remèdes que les Espagnols leur ont appliquez pour les tascher de les effacer.'

ing with Atákapas along what is now the Calcasieu River in southwestern Louisiana. Barroto reported that the boy had "a black line that goes down the front to the end of his nose, another from the lower lip to the end of the chin, another small one next to each eye and, on each cheek, a small black spot. Like the nose, the lips also are blackened, and the arms are painted with other markings." The Talons would likely have had similar tattoos.

Desclouzeaux's notes say nothing more about the "hundred remedies" that the Talons had been subjected to. One suspects that some of them were painful, or at the very least unpleasant—perhaps as much as the original process of being tattooed. Why had the Talons' Spanish hosts (or captors, depending on one's perspective) tried so hard to scrub away the traces of the children's pasts?



Bernard Romans, *A concise natural history of East and West-Florida* (Philadelphia, 1776), 58.
John Carter Brown Library at Brown University

As the viceroy's family scoured the Talons' skins in Mexico City, their efforts might have been influenced by stories of Gonzalo Guerrero, a Spaniard who famously landed in Yucatán in 1511 as the result of a shipwreck. Stories about the castaway were more legend than fact, but all agreed that Guerrero had joined the Maya and refused to rejoin Spanish society despite efforts by the Cortés expedition and others to recover him. A key reason he supposedly gave to Spanish messengers for his permanent transculturation? His tattoos. Chronicler Bernal Díaz claimed Guerrero told an envoy: "I am married and have three children, and they have me as a lord and captain … go yourself with God, for my face is tattooed and my ears are pierced. What will those Spaniards say of me if they see me like this?"

Rolena Adorno has argued that the Guerrero tales reflected Spanish fears of hidden heretics or conversos undermining religious purity. In turn, Guerrero's decision to stay with the Mayas may have reflected his fear of those fears. The stories also registered concern that appearance, behavior, and identity were all easily mutable: Guerrero's tattoos might transform him, irrevocably, into a Mayan warrior.

Once the Talons were back in French hands, there is no evidence that their countrymen prioritized erasing their tattoos, as the Spanish had. Far from it. Instead, they hoped to utilize their altered appearances, and their knowledge of indigenous languages, to aid new French expeditions to the Gulf

region as translators and guides. The French officers placed the two Talons with a Canadian company that accompanied Pierre Le Moyne, sieur d'Iberville, on his second voyage to the Gulf. The five Talon siblings, accompanied by their stubbornly indelible tattoos, continued to circulate through the Atlantic, some remaining in France, others settling in Louisiana and Canada.



The Talons did not report how they felt about their tattoos. They may have valued them, or they may have sought their erasure. Some of those tattooed, however, wanted to keep their markings, only to find themselves subject to the violent interventions of others.

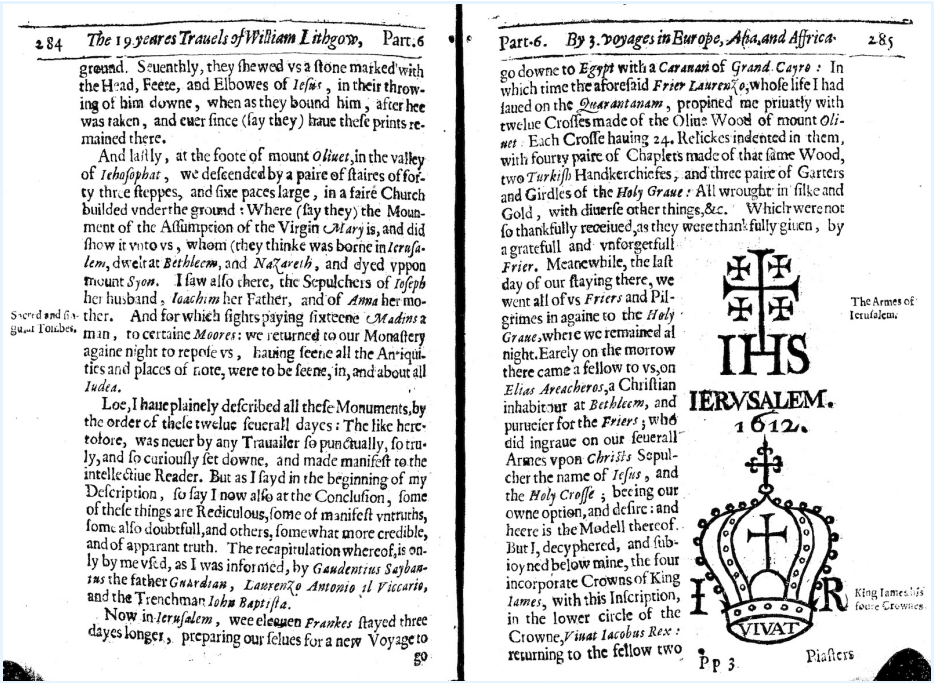
A Scottish traveler to Jerusalem in the early seventeenth century, William Lithgow, participated in what was a common practice for pilgrims to the Holy Land: receiving a commemorative tattoo, the so-called 'Jerusalem mark,' while visiting the site of Jesus's tomb. Lithgow paid two piasters, he later wrote, to have "the name of Jesus and the Holy Crosse … engraved" on his right arm. A courtier to King James VI and I, Lithgow asked the tattooist to add to this image "The Neuer-conquered Crowne of Scotland, and the now Inconquerable Crowne of England, ioyned also to it; with this inscription, painefully carued in letters, within the circle of the Crowne, Viuat Iacobus Rex."

Returning from his pilgrimage, Lithgow was detained in Spain upon suspicion of being a spy. There, he claimed, he was imprisoned and tortured—and when his captors discovered "the marke of Jerusalem … joyned with the name and Crowne of King James" on his arm, they "gave direction to teare asunder, the name and Crowne" of what they called "that Heretike King, arch-enemy to the Holy Catholike Church." Lithgow's torturers wrapped cords around his arm, then tightened them until they cut "the Crowne, sinewes, and flesh." Permanently maiming him, this act was intended to punish, and to erase Lithgow's bodily connection to his Protestant king and country. An unintended effect, of course, was to give Lithgow a claim to martyrdom on behalf of his "matchlesse Monarch".

Lithgow's tattoo was attacked by his captors as a symbol of beliefs they found offensive, a sign of faith and loyalty they rejected. A tattoo celebrating a British, Protestant king would have been, under any circumstance, unappealing to Spanish Catholics. But in other settings, it was not the tattoo's symbolism or imagery that made it a target for removal, but rather the unauthorized body that it appeared on.

Examples from Native American communities demonstrate collective enforcement of standards regarding who merited tattoos. Trader James Adair, living among Chickasaws in the 1740s, wrote, "the blue marks over their breasts and arms [are] … as legible as our alphabetical characters are to us." Adair asserted that these "wild hieroglyphics" were used in order to "register" their bearers "among the brave." The implications for one's status, if tattooed, were profound. Signs of achievement, tattoos could also single out captives taken in war for particular torture. Adair suggested that fighters taken captive

*Two adult survivors of the La Salle expedition were men named L'Archevêque and Grollet, who were also apparently tattooed by Native Americans and then captured, like the Talon children, by the Spanish. They ultimately took service with the Spanish and were sent as soldier-settlers to New Mexico, suggesting that Spanish officials may have also seen the value of tattoos as potential passports through Native territories.



284 *The 19 yeares Trauels of William Lithgow,* Part.6

ground. Seuenthly, they shewed vs a stone marked with the Head, Feete, and Elbowes of *Iesus*, in their throwing of him downe, when as they bound him, after hee was taken, and euer since (say they) haue these prints remained there.

And lastly, at the foote of mount *Oliuet*, in the valley of *Iehosophat*, we descended by a paire of staires of forty three steppes, and sixe paces large, in a faire Church builded vnder the ground: Where (say they) the Mounment of the Assumption of the Virgin *Mary* is, and did show it vnto vs, whom (they thinke was borne in *Ierusalem*, dwelt at *Bethleem*, and *Nazareth*, and dyed vppon mount *Syon*. I saw also there, the Sepulchers of *Ioseph* her husband, *Ioachim* her Father, and of *Anna* her mother. And for which sights paying sixteene *Madins* a man, to certaine *Moores*: we returned to our Monastery againe night to repose vs, hauing seene all the Antiquities and places of note, were to be seene, in, and about all *Iudea*.

Sacred and figured Tombes.

Loe, I haue plainely described all these Monuments, by the order of these twelue seuerall dayes: The like heretofore, was neuer by any Trauailer so punctually, so truly, and so curiously set downe, and made manifest to the intellectiue Reader. But as I sayd in the beginning of my Description, so say I now also at the Conclusion, some of these things are Rediculous, some of manifest vntruths, some also doubtfull, and others, somewhat more credible, and of apparant truth. The recapitulation whereof, is only by me vsed, as I was informed, by *Gaudentius Sayhanus* the father *Guardian*, *Laurenzo Antonio il Viccario*, and the Trenchman *Iohn Baptista*.

Now in *Ierusalem*, wee eleuen *Frankes* stayed three dayes longer, preparing our selues for a new Voyage to go

Part.6. *By 3. Voyages in Europe, Asia, and Africa.* 285

go downe to *Egypt* with a *Caranan* of *Grand Cayro*: In which time the aforesaid *Frier Laurenzo*, whose life I had saued on the *Quarantanam*, propined me priuatly with twelue Crosses made of the Olive Wood of mount *Olinet*. Each Crosse hauing 24. Relickes indented in them, with fourty paire of Chaplets made of that same Wood, two *Turkish* Handkerchiefes, and three paire of Garters and Girdles of the *Holy Graue*: All wrought in silke and Gold, with diuerse other things, &c. Which were not so thankfully receiued, as they were thankfully giuen, by a gratefull and vnforgetfull *Frier*. Meanewhile, the last day of our staying there, we went all of vs *Friers* and Pilgrimes in againe to the *Holy Graue*, where we remained al night. Earely on the morrow there came a fellow to vs, on *Elias Areacheros*, a Christian inhabitour at *Bethleem*, and purueier for the *Friers*; who did ingraue on our seuerall Armes vpon *Christs* Sepulcher the name of *Iesus*, and the *Holy Crosse*; beeing our owne option, and desire: and heere is the Modell thereof. But I, decyphered, and subioyned below mine, the four incorporate Crowns of King *Iames*, with this Inscription, in the lower circle of the Crowne, *Viuat Iacobus Rex*: returning to the fellow two

The Armes of Ierusalem.

King Iames his foure Crownes.

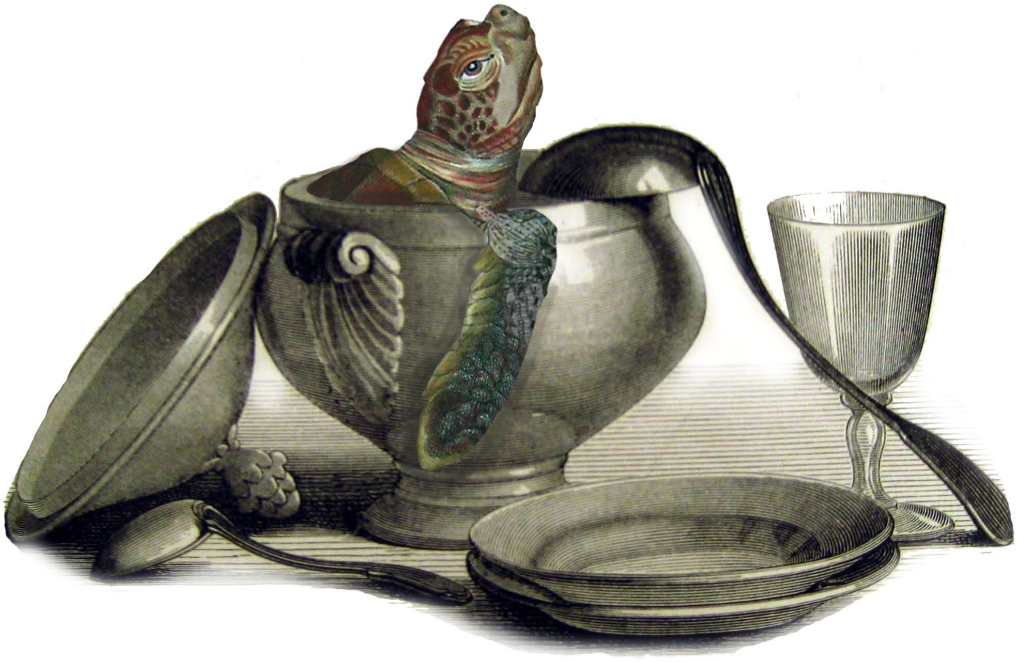
Pp 3 Piasters

Lithgow's tattoo from Jerusalem, as depicted in William Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures and Panful Perigrinations* (London, 1632), p. 151.
Wikimedia Commons

who were "pretty far advanced in life, as well as in war-gradations, always atone for the blood they spilt, by the tortures of the fire," arguing that it was by their tattoos that an individual's war history was known. Such risks, however, were outweighed by the prestige the "hieroglyphics" carried within one's own community, leading some, Adair wrote, to give themselves tattoos without having first performed the deeds necessary to earn them. "The Chikkasah ... erazed any false marks their warriors proudly and privately gave themselves—in order to engage them to give real proofs of their martial virtue," Adair commented. In a public shaming, the perpetrators were "degraded ... by stretching the marked parts, and rubbing them with the juice of green corn, which in a great degree took out the impression."

One might call these tattoos forged or counterfeit, except that neither term is quite accurate: the tattoos themselves were real, as the culprits had been painfully and publicly reminded. But the social motivations behind them were judged as unjustified by others, who then required that the claims made by the marks under the skin be nullified. Anthropologist Alfred Gell has argued that "a tattoo ... is always a registration of an external social milieu," adding, "the apparently self-willed tattoo always turns out to have been elicited by others, and to be a means of eliciting responses from others." While the universality of this claim is debatable, it does suggest a corollary: that tattoo removal is also a registration of a social milieu, either prompted—or forced—by relations between people.

Whether voluntary, as in the case of Wafer's buccaneer companion, or involuntary, as for Lithgow, the removal of early modern tattoos demonstrates how high the cultural stakes were for those with body modifications. The social alienation of having an unusual or collectively disapproved-of appearance, it seems, could be more agonizing than the "scarifying and fetching off a great part of the Skin."



The Politics of the Turtle Feast

India Mandelkern

From calipash to calipee, the green sea turtle was without doubt the most expensive, status-laden, and morally contested feat of eighteenth-century English cuisine. Virtually unknown as human food before mid-century, the amphibious reptile quickly became an enduring symbol of both refined taste and savage indulgence, even though the vast majority of the English public had never seen, let alone eaten, one. So powerful was the association between turtle and culinary refinement that even an unabashed imitation—'mock turtle'—became respectable middle class fare. But despite the ubiquity of the turtle feast in contemporary print culture, the social stakes of the turtle's consumption remain a mystery.*

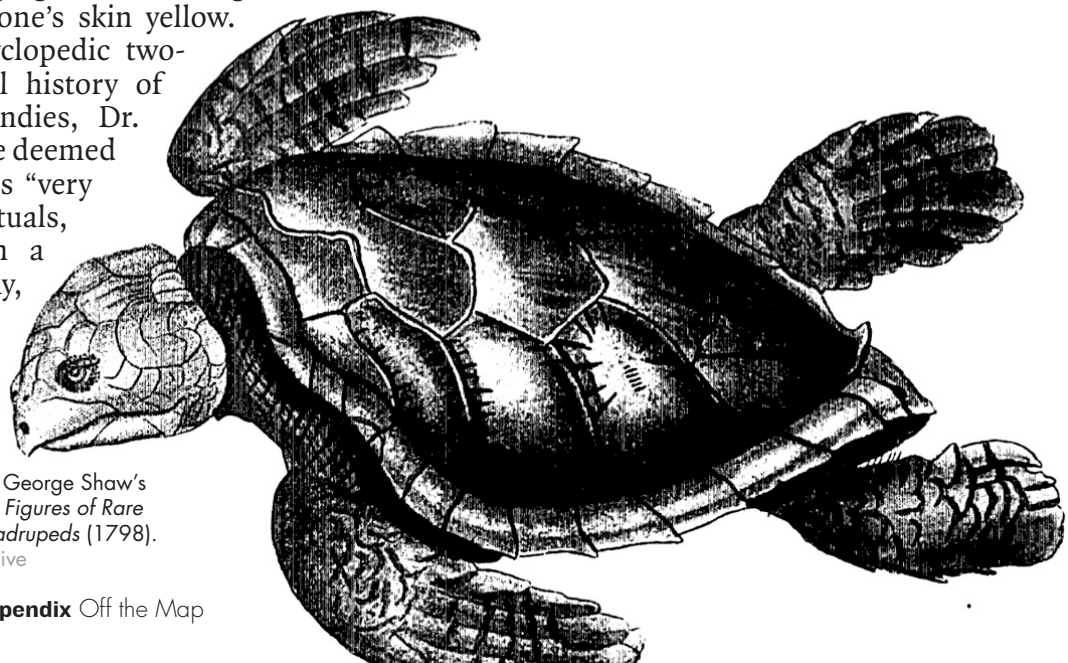
It is unclear when the first sea turtle was consumed in England, if we can even call it a turtle. (Early modern naturalists generally referred to it as a "sea-tortoise"; the colonists who caught them in the West Indies, known as "turtlers," apparently popularized the word.) In 1682, the naturalist Thomas Amy categorized three types of them: the hawk's-bill, which had a nice shell "clearer and better clouded than any other," the green turtle, which made up in flavor what it lacked in appearance, and the loggerhead turtle, which, according to one travel writer, "has neither good shell [n]or flesh, so is little minded or regarded."‡

*Mock turtle was made out of calves' brains seasoned with herbs, eggs, as well as several West Indian ingredients such as Madeira and cayenne pepper, in order to imitate the sea turtle's unique Creole flavor. It came of age during the 1760s and continued to be served throughout the 19th century. "Dining on turtle," Kirkby and Luckins write, "brought from the Caribbean to cold wet England, in an elaborate ritual of prestige and taste, required systems of trade and communication, transport, monetary exchange and knowledge of cooking techniques that came together at that historical moment to create that particular experience." Unfortunately, this is the extent of their analysis of turtle feasting.

‡In the eighteenth century a fourth kind of turtle appeared on tables, the "trunk turtle" which was condemned as "rank and unwholesome."

Despite these rather straightforward distinctions, classifying the sea turtle was not easy. Seventeenth-century natural historians tentatively grouped it with sea creatures such as prawns, fish, lobsters, and oysters, but its three hearts, one physician observed, have "caused some to philosophize on its amphibious nature." As the naturalist Thomas Amy pointed out, the animal "swims like a fish, lays eggs like a fowl, and feeds on grass like an ox." (It also apparently stayed alive for up to nine hours even after it had been cut in half, entrancing many early modern naturalists.) Classifying turtle according to its taste was no easier. Some thought it tasted like beef, others like chicken, and still others described its fat as exactly like bone marrow, with the "consistency of butter"—that is, if you could get past the otherworldly color and "musk-like" smell.

As early modern medical wisdom held that flavor was closely linked to a substance's medicinal properties, physicians were equally baffled when it came to the turtle's nutritional value. Some considered it a useful treatment for venereal diseases and scurvy, well-suited to the oppressive and highly infectious climate of the West Indies. But they were quick to admit that it had some unpleasant side effects, ranging from infecting the blood to turning one's skin yellow. In his encyclopedic two-part natural history of the West Indies, Dr. Hans Sloane deemed green turtles "very good victuals, and sustain a great many, especially of the poorer sort on the island." Sloane believed green turtles superior to the other breeds because they did not taste "fishy," although he insisted that smaller land turtles were in fact "more delicate food." Indeed, Sloane made clear that turtle was more of a necessity than a choice for English colonists, as beef and veal raised in Jamaica tasted terrible, cost four times as much, and rotted in a matter of hours. Turtle flesh, meanwhile, could be salted and barreled, peppered and baked, or reduced into a nourishing broth. It was versatile when it needed to be. But only provisionally did it count as food.



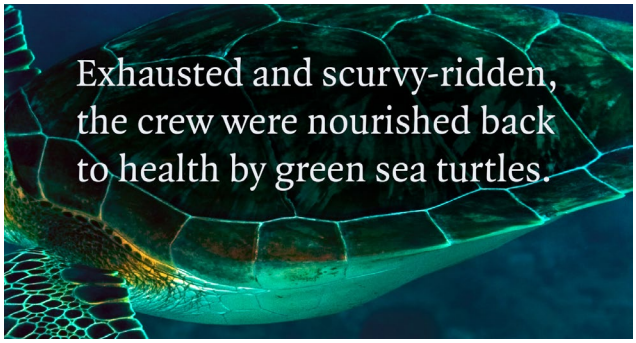
A sea turtle from George Shaw's *Cimelia Physica: Figures of Rare and Curious Quadrupeds* (1798). The Internet Archive

*In 1789, William Cullen classified it as an amphibian, but *Testudo mydas* was its own class. Buffon said the hands had five fingers in natural history of birds, fish, insects, and reptiles. Not until the century's end do I find mention of the age of a turtle, in George Shaw's *Cimelia Physica: Figures of Rare and Curious Quadrupeds* (London, 1798.) Shaw states that a turtle brought over in 1633 and living until 1753 at Lambeth in a private garden p.54. Colloquial eighteenth-century accounts refer to it as a fish. In 1758, Linneaus labeled it *testuda mydas*.

‡Eating it also turned his urine "yellowish-green, and oily."

Well before they became food for polite society, turtles were curiosities for literary consumption. A sea turtle containing "three score" eggs was a welcome surprise for Robinson Crusoe after he had spent nearly nine months subsisting on island goats and fowls. Inquisitive readers could even examine real turtle shells on display alongside Chinese pincushions and American wampum belts at Don Saltero's Coffee House. And while one weekly newspaper reported a turtle delivered to and enjoyed by the Royal Family in 1728, this did not immediately accord the turtle noble status. Traditionally courtly foods had depended on their ability to manifest disparities of power and caste. Deer hunting privileges, for example, had been strictly regulated for centuries, and the passage of the Waltham Black Acts in 1723 rendered poaching a capital offense. Delicate ortolans imported from France, each of which contained only a few morsels of meat, were served at royal banquets by the hundreds as markers of conspicuous profusion. And the flesh of the serpent-like Severn lamprey was considered so delicious that they virtually compelled men to gorge themselves to death, explaining a contemporary Italian proverb to "give eels, but no wine to your enemy." King George II had enjoyed all three of these alimentary symbols of kingship at the Lord Mayor's Banquet held in 1727. But the sea turtle was conspicuously absent.*‡§

The elevation of turtle to haute cuisine happened rather abruptly in the early 1750s. And perhaps no one did more to mythologize it among London elites than did Baron George Anson (1697-1762), who in 1740 was dispatched to attack Spanish possessions in the Caribbean during the War of Jenkins' Ear. Anson's successes were mixed. While he succeeded in capturing a Spanish galleon full of silver, making himself a peer, a celebrity, and a very rich man, his crew did not fare so well. Only 188 out of 1900 men returned to England with him after his circumnavigation of the globe in 1744; the majority succumbed to starvation or scurvy.



As soon as he returned, several accounts of Anson's voyage were printed and circulated for the reading public's pleasure. Some of them dwelled on the less appetizing parts of the trip: men ate seals (which also apparently tasted like beef), sea lions, and seaweed. Turtle, like it had for Sloane, was depicted as emergency relief, coming up only insofar that men were forced to drink its blood when they couldn't find any fresh water. That same year, however, Anson's official chaplain, Richard Walter, published a much lengthier and embellished first-hand account of the voyage, where he described the sea turtle as a *delicacy* as well as a nutritional miracle. Exhausted and scurvy-ridden while stationed in Quibo (modern day Coiba off the coast of Panama) the ailing crew were purportedly nourished back to health by green sea turtles "in the greatest plenty and perfection," with "pleasant

*Crusoe found the turtle flesh "the most savoury or pleasant that ever I tasted in my life." Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (London, 1726) p. 43.

‡See "The Rarities display'd at Don Saltero's coffee house" (London, 1750?). Two (ostensibly stuffed) turtles emerging out of shells and one (decapitated) turtle head are included in the catalogue. For more on Don Saltero's as a permanent exhibition of curiosities, see chapter five in Brian Cowan's *The Social Life of Coffee: the Emergence of the British Coffee House* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

§All archival material pertaining to the Lord Mayor's Banquet and the Corporation of London can be found at the London Metropolitan Archives, Clerkenwell.

and salubrious" flesh, "white, and exceedingly sweet." Over the four years they took to travel around the world, Anson's crew had been out of necessity obliged to try almost every exotic animal out there–from iguanas to penguins–but turtle was unquestionably the tastiest. Over the four months that they subsisted on nothing but fresh turtle meat, Walter pointed out, the crew stayed in good spirits, and only two men died.

But Walter's depiction of this convivial turtle-feast made it clear that turtle nourished more than just the body. For the curious, self-reliant, and freedom-loving British sailors, it was love at first bite. On the other hand, the captured Spanish prisoners (being naturally "superstitious" and "prejudiced," Walter observed) were reluctant to indulge, believing turtle to be poisonous. But after observing that none of the English died from this modification to their diet, Walter wrote:

> ... they at last got so far the better of their aversion, as to be persuaded to taste it, to which the absence of all other kinds of fresh provisions might not a little contribute. However it was with great reluctance, and very sparingly, that they first began to eat of it, but the relish improving upon them by degrees, they at last grew extremely fond of it, and preferred it to every other kind of food, and often felicitated each other on the happy experience they had acquired, and the luxurious and plentiful repasts it would always be in their power to procure, when they should again return back to their country.

In fact, after licking their lips with turtle grease, the Spanish considered the meal "*more* delicious to the palate than any their haughty lords and masters could indulge in," which Walter deemed "doubtless ... the most fortunate [circumstance] that could befall them."

In this context, communal turtle feasting seemed to unmask the Spanish Empire's fanaticism and cruelty. The food's *taste* conveyed to the sailors knowledge of their miserable and unenlightened existence prior to British capture. Sensual enjoyment of the meat not only concretized the reality of their prior suffering, but it also replaced a cruel despotic system with a physically and spiritually nourishing one based on self-reliance and sociability. Indeed, turtle-catching required teamwork; Anson dispatched "runners" to scout the beach and turn the animals on their backs before they could crawl back into the ocean, whereupon a larger crew could come and lug them back to the ship. "We caught [by this method] what quantity we pleased with great facility," Walter wrote. This fraternal spirit was only reinforced by the setting of the communal feast, which took place on an uninhabited sun-drenched beach without law, women, or even cookery.

Walter's account of the voyage became a huge hit, going into dozens of editions over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. And while it is unlikely that this myth was single-handedly responsible for whetting



Paul de Lamerie, silver tureen in the shape of a green sea turtle (1750/51).
Minneapolis Institute of Arts

the British public's palate for turtle, in the following years, both George Anson and the sea turtle reciprocally reinforced each other's celebrity. In 1754, the *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer* reported that Lord Anson (he was now First Lord of the Admiralty) had gifted a three hundred pound turtle to the gentlemen of White's Chocolate House, one of the most notorious and exclusive gambling clubs in London. Two months later he presented another one to the Royal Society's dining club, then presided over by the Earl of Macclesfield.

Both of these clubs were aristocratic in composition (in fact, their memberships overlapped) and enjoyed reputations for eating sumptuous meals. The gentlemen of White's, one satirist observed, "are no less adept in the science of Eating than Gaming," while the Royal Society's club had even established special provisions honoring donors of venison, turtle, and beef. Anson's visit to the Royal Society was so highly anticipated that news of his live turtle was sent out by penny post. Twenty-eight men—a record turnout—showed up that afternoon. At the dinner, his health was toasted in claret in thanks for his "magnificent present."*‡

These turtle feasts attracted attention and excitement for several reasons. Communal consumption of this quasi-patriotic luxury testified to the limitless possibilities offered by the expanding Empire as well as London's growing stature as a major political, economic, and cultural center. The unique taste allowed club members to vicariously experience Anson's overseas adventures and to commemorate the edible tool that capacitated his victory over the Spanish. But turtle feasting was more than a political act. Just as it had on the uninhabited beaches of Coiba, feasting in an all-male context lubricated masculine discourse, free from the trappings of polite civility. Indeed, the West Indian sea turtle—being a natural repast comparable only to the roast beef of England in size—painted a sharp contrast to the refined *cullises*, *puptons* and frivolous little "kickshaws" prepared by overpaid French cooks. Unlike the refined French "restaurants" or "essences" concentrated into dainty dishes, West Indian turtles were so large that they often dwarfed the kitchens and dining rooms they inhabited, sometimes obstructing the regular channels of social discourse. A group of Royal Society fellows was none too pleased when *another* club feasting on a 400 pounder booked their usual meeting room. Likewise, the challenge of fitting Anson's gift into the White's Club oven was found newsworthy by several different papers.

We shouldn't assume that preoccupations with the turtle's size went hand in hand with gluttonous greed. Feasting in early modern England was understood as an occasion for hospitality, and mid-century turtle chroniclers always stressed this fact. According to contemporary cookbooks, one thirty-pound turtle could create five to six different dishes and feed a large family; it was the epitome of head-to-tail

*While this was not the first time that the Royal Philosophers got the chance to feast on such a treat, they had experienced more than their share of turtle-related mishaps. In fact, the first turtle mentioned in the club's record books was not eaten because it had died in transit from the West Indies. Only freshly slaughtered turtle was considered acceptable to human food; after twenty-four hours, it supposedly adopted a rancid and unpalatable flavor.

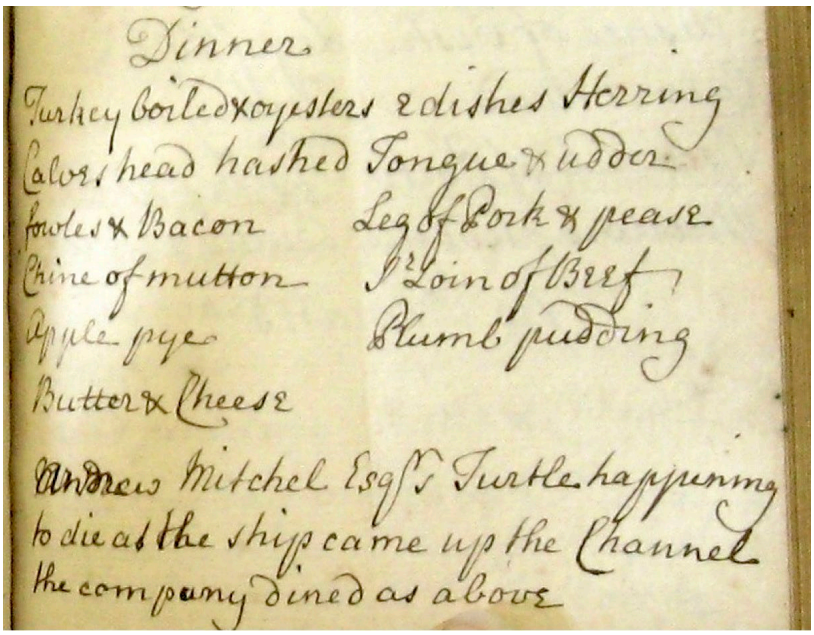
‡A note in the Thursday's Club dinner books dated September 2, 1754 stated the penny post letters to the members on account of Anson's turtle cost the club 2 shillings. Thursday's Club Dinner Books, RSC Papers, Royal Society Archives.

cooking. Throughout the 1750s, newspapers reported a number of enormous turtles brought into England, some of which reputedly clocked in at 500 pounds and measured eight feet from fin to fin. In 1754 for example, the *London Evening Post* reported that a couple of French fishermen off of the Ile de Ré had allegedly caught a turtle weighing nearly 800 pounds. The head alone weighed twenty-five pounds, a single fin weighed twelve; "the whole community made four plentiful dinners of the liver alone." The shell even doubled as a communal bowl, evoking an authentic form of fellowship predating history and time. In a society bedeviled by artifice and foppery at every turn, feasting on sea turtle consecrated genuine social bonds among men.*

*Newspaper accounts often boast about the number of people sated by a single animal. See, for example, the *London Evening Post*, Oct 5-Oct 8, 1754 (London, England) Issue 4198, the *London Magazine, or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer* (London, 1760), and the *London Magazine, or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer* (London, 1760).

These private club dinners mythologized the turtle as a thoroughly modern delicacy, even though its clientele soon extended beyond the aristocratic virtuoso. "Turtle feasting is relished on both sides of the town," one weekly proclaimed, as the dish became the chosen treat of City councilmen as well as Westminster politicians. So widely coveted did turtle become that some feared it might usurp roast beef's place as the quintessential English food.

But as it transitioned from an exotic panacea to a luxury commodity available for purchase, the turtle feast became increasingly morally questionable. In 1755, the weekly periodical *The World* published a satirical "insider's account" of an English turtle feast, likening it to a perverse libertine bacchanal rather than an improving social exercise. Feasting now had scripted rites and rituals of its own, from loose, toga-like "turtle clothes" to "saws, chisels and instruments" designed to scrape the calipash dry. Instead of feeding on seaweed or algae, these naturally vegetarian creatures allegedly fattened in England on a leg of mutton per day. The feast, moreover, turned men (and women—a noteworthy addition) into figurative beasts. "The


Dinner
Turkey Boiled Oysters 2 dishes Herring
Calves head hashed Tongue & udder
fowles & Bacon Leg of Pork & pease
Chine of mutton 1/2 Loin of Beef
Apple pye Plumb pudding
Butter & Cheese
Andrew Mitchel Esqrs Turtle happening
to die as the ships came up the Channel
the company dined as above

The Royal Society club's minutes forlornly record their failure to obtain a suitable turtle.

plunderers were sensible to no call but their own appetites," the narrator observed, chowing down with "eagerness" and "rapacity," abandoning all pretentions of hospitality or restraint. This account isn't the only turtle-feast to transform otherwise polite men into ravenous gluttons. In 1770, a disappointed guest at a corporation dinner wrote an angry letter to the *General Evening Post*, reporting that *entire tables received only empty platters and empty turtle shells* because the guests served first had eaten it all.*

In the mouths of those unable to sublimate their appetite to the strictures of polite behavior, the turtle became a mind-altering substance rather than a communal meal. After a bad day in the market, one fictional stockbroker finds temporary solace in a turtle seasoned with cayenne pepper, which "operated [upon him] so strongly, that his heart was dilated [and] his spirits were exhilarated." When it came to the overdoses, satirists had a field day. In Baron George Lyttleton's *Dialogues of the Dead*, historical epicure Charles Darteneuf fantasized about coming back to life simply to taste a turtle—what he called the "very best of all foods"—and pledged "to kill myself by the Quantity of it I would eat before the next morning." While the turtle's taste had strengthened social bonds among Anson's crew, the metropolitan turtle addict rarely concerned himself with its flavor or his health. Instead, he boasted of the sheer quantities he could consume or lent his crest to a so-called "turtle-house." One 1796 moralist linked the turtle connoisseur to an "idolotor" who "worshipped the culinary image wherever he put it up." And instead of nourishing conversation and camaraderie, the men associated with the metropolitan feast often figuratively metamorphosed into turtles themselves: "Sir Greenfin Calipash," "Councilman Guzzledown" and "Dr. Feastlove" became common satiric jabs. It was perhaps due to all this negative press that the Scottish inventor James Watt felt the need to justify his turtle dinners with the aristocratic Royal Society club in his letters, attesting in 1780 that "never was turtle eaten with *greater sobriety and temperance*, or more good fellowship." Whether turtle eating exemplified polite connoisseurship or indulgent excess had a lot to do with the kind of people who were eating it.‡

As turtle became the epicure's status symbol, commanding up to four and a half shillings a pound and a slew of classifieds printed in the papers, its delicious restorative qualities were soon forgotten. Instead, moralists condemned a taste for turtle as a sign of a vitiated palate habituated to eating disgusting food unfit for civilized consumption. For if turtle became accepted as a national dish, what exotic animal might next become food for Englishmen? In *Dialogues of the Dead*, the notorious Roman glutton Apicius comforts Darteneuf (despondent that he had never tasted turtle) with the knowledge that "as you have eat[en] Delicacies that I have never tasted, so the next age will eat something unknown to the present. New discoveries will be made, and new delicacies

*Did "turtle clothes" actually exist? I have yet to find any evidence of real turtle eating uniform. Most likely this simply meant loose-fitting clothes. The only other reference I have found comes from "A Scene of Shades" published in the *General Evening Post*, October 11, 1770. This article tells the story of fictional "Common Councilman Guzzledown" who announces, "because I knew there was to be a great deal of turtle, I put on my light drab frock and gold-laced scarlet waistcoat that laces down the back." If you are a textile historian with any knowledge of 18th-century turtle clothes, please get in touch!

‡George Lyttelton, *Dialogues of the Dead* (London, 1760). Darteneuf actually existed; he was a member of the Kit Kat club and died before turtle-eating had penetrated Great Britain. You can find out more about him in Philip Carter's article "Charles Dartiquenave," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Jan, 2008.



"Sir Joseph Banks about to eat an alligator, or fish supper' by Thomas Rowlandson (1788).
The Tate London

brought from other parts of the world." And if corrupted palates could develop a liking for turtle, moralists asked, what was to prevent alligator from becoming the next culinary sensation? In fact, there was ample evidence suggesting that the honest and virtuous man had no taste for turtle at all. "Poor Carlton's stomach was so nearly turn'd by the smell and appearance of the calipash and calipee," the musician John Marsh wrote in his diary in 1787, "that he had to put his head out the window to breathe. One early nineteenth-century account, penned by a provincial commoner, insisted that "[t]he green fat … made me sick enough to look at, let alone the eating of it."

From provisional food to spiritual restorative to object of alimentary desire, we must ask ourselves why the turtle feast became such a powerful myth. For those capable of sacrificing their appetite to the civic good, eating an exotic food such as sea turtle could provide mental clarity, enlightened conversation, and forge social bonds among men. Yet for those who ate for the sake of pleasing the appetite, connoisseurship of turtle became a sign of moral failing and loss of reason that turned back the clock on the civilizing process. The tenor of these literary representations suggested that sumptuary regulation was alive and well in everything but name. One's social rank still determined what was medically and morally fit to eat. More importantly, the sea turtle's transformation from an exotic rarity into a luxury item available for purchase did not mean that everyone who could now afford it also had the ability to appreciate its sublime flavor.

In other words, the privileged could demonstrate their cultivation by eating calipash and calipee, but for the rest of us, pleasures of the palate were indelible proof of our depraved animal nature. Like the turtle itself, we lacked taste.



Animal Kingdoms

Katherine Noble

January 28, 1393: the mentally unstable young French King Charles VI demands that his courtiers dress as shaggy-haired "wild men" and dance in a "diabolical frenzy" while holding flaming torches. Their resin-soaked suits catch fire before a horrified court, killing four of the highest noblemen in France. After the carnage, Charles VI, who survived, was revealed to be one of the wild men. King Charles began to believe that he was made of glass and often ran "howling like a wolf down the corridors of the royal palaces."

Keene Prize-winning poet Katherine Noble wrote this poem for The Appendix in the Cascade Mountains of Oregon, inspired by Charles' story and the thought that "history can be summarized as the story of humans begging one another for attention."

Animal Kingdoms

I do not want to board the ark with the other couples.
God is the saddest animal.
He cannot create an equal, so he is immortally
alone. On the seventh day,
he panicked,
taking a step back from the tableau. Realizing Adam
was sullen as his lover, he sacrificed
his own happiness. He created Eve.
While washing dishes at dawn, the chickens
shriek in my yard. The cock mounts the closest hen
and everything is violent, then over.
When I dreamt of my wedding,
a shooter hid in the rafters and everyone died
except me. There is a trapdoor
in the places you least expect it. A child's treehouse.
The climax of the opera. The scene of the crime.

And happiness. I do not want it.
I am sweating through my silks.
There is not enough time for everyone to get what they want.
Let's draw straws! I must referee
so I can rig the odds. Or marry into royalty.
As a child, I believed I could win everything,
but in retrospect, I usually cheated.
M. read my love letter out loud
to the class in third grade
while I was in the room.
Fifteen years later I still reveal
too much to men—can nothing
shame the animals permanently? I omit
details and remember love otherwise.
The function of revisionist history! Charles VI,
known as the Beloved

or the Mad, depending on who is translating,
believed he was made of glass and could die
at the slightest force. He swore
his coat of arms had changed into a lion
with a sword stabbing it.
He often ran through the palace wailing
like this kind of wounded animal, his death
chasing him blind. Noli me tangere.
God is the most fragile animal.
No one can touch him! Charles
lit his courtiers aflame
as they danced with him in wolf suits,
writhing like waifish women at a disco.

The French court clapped and clapped.
Everything is violent, then over.
My horoscope haunts me: Sagittarians
are prone to die by fire.

But tell me when it's my turn
to shed my spirit and dance.
I am going to Guadalajara
where every color is primary
and every dance is for the groin!
I will weep with the midnight tenor and climax
with the brass of one thousand mouths.
The ring is reserved
for the dancing animals. I enter with the rest.
The drunk waltz of baboons, the ballerina
bears with kohl-lined eyes. The horses jumping through hoops,
carrying spangle-breasted women posing
spread-eagle. Distract me with a song and dance. Silence,
then another encore.

Then another, so I do not notice the curtains closing.
The water rising. The cannons taking aim.
History can be summarized as the story of humans begging one another
for attention, using a variety of violences and passions,
penises and slow progress to reach this end.
But, I do not cast the first stone.
In the animal kingdom,
this grief is not a private thing! The elephants
process around the carcass, smelling each bone
and testing the dead weight in their trunks.
The monkey carried its stillborn for two months on its back.
I remember the little Pegasus
flying out of the groaning stag
in Picasso's pencil drafts of *Guernica*.
The spirit unaccustomed
to the gross fleshiness of our exaggerated
dying. It makes a quiet, erasable exit,
leaving only an animal body
writhing across that difficult, flaming tableau
in the draft we all remember.



Reclaiming a Fugitive Landscape

Susanna Ashton and Jonathan Hepworth

Introduction

Slaves were allowed three day's holiday at Christmas time, and so it was over Christmas that John Andrew Jackson decided to escape.

> The first day I devoted to bidding a sad, though silent farewell to my people; for I did not even dare to tell my father or mother that I was going, lest for joy they should tell some one else. Early next morning, I left them playing their "fandango" play. I wept as I looked at them enjoying their innocent play, and thought it was the last time I should ever see them, for I was determined never to return alive.*

To run by day or by night? To flee on a road or in the woods? To rely upon subterfuge or unadulterated boldness? These were life-or-death decisions for a fugitive slave. When John Andrew Jackson fled a Sumter District plantation in South Carolina, he made strategic choices for his survival. He had a pony and rode mostly on roads, talking his way out of confrontations. Jackson gambled on his plausibility and charm. Most of all, he clung to a faith in his ability to mislead others with his own imagination. He crafted his own terrain.

Jackson wrote of his escape in an 1862 memoir entitled *The Experience Of A Slave in South Carolina*. While his memoir was composed some fifteen years after his 1846 escape, many of the details Jackson recalled were precise. Some of them, though, represented a hazy dreamscape of horror—a perspective blurred by fear and despair. He sought, as he explained it, to see from above:

> I may as well relate here, how I became acquainted with the fact of there being a Free State. The "Yankees," or Northerners, when they visited our plantation, used to tell the negroes that there was a country called England, where there were no slaves, and that the city of Boston was free; and we used to wish we knew which way to travel to find those places. When we were picking cotton, we used to see the wild geese flying over our heads to some distant land, and we often used to say to each other, "O that we had wings like those geese, then we would fly over the heads of our masters to the 'Land of the Free.'"

But Jackson's flight from South Carolina did not begin with the furtive acquisition of a pony that allowed him to traverse 150 miles of roads, rivers, and swamps. Rather, it began with imagining the landscape from a bird's eye view. It was Jackson's ability to project a higher vision of his own relationship to the land, mentally flying from South Carolina itself, that enabled his more physical flight.



Jackson escapes his pursuers on horseback, from from his memoir, *The Experience of a Slave in South Carolina* (London, 1862). American Antiquarian Society

*'Fandango' here is a shorthand for foolishness and lighthearted fun.

For enslaved people, geography has had a fraught and haunting significance. It resonates most powerfully in their memoirs but also glows in their interviews and recollections from later years. Whether slavery adhered to place or to the person was, of course, the question that framed the entire division of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America into 'free states' and 'slave states.' And worst of all, of course, were the ambiguous status of Kansas, Oklahoma, and the territories yet to be delineated in that cruel rubric of the antebellum period. How much did 'place' in the United States define citizenship, freedom and identity? Could one ever escape?

Jackson's flight suggests a possible answer. If locale fundamentally defined identity, then one could assert the rights of citizenship or national identity by claiming one's physical relationship to the larger land of America. Those rights were fragile, however, as Jackson soon discovered. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Act rendered slaves liable to forcible return to plantations no matter where they were, which effectively made geography within the United States irrelevant to one's status. Under such a law, could a place ever be reclaimed or reoccupied under different terms by someone who fled bondage?*

Could a person even buy back the land that enslaved them?

John Andrew Jackson's flight and eventual return to South Carolina illustrate how one man worked out these questions not just logistically, but also imaginatively. At one point during his escape, Jackson was asked, "Who do you belong to?" With no easy answer at hand, Jackson replied simply, "I belong to South Carolina."

For whatever reason, the retort satisfied the interrogators, who let him be. Jackson's carefully-crafted remark, however, suggests how profoundly his identity was tied to his sense of place. As he continued in his memoir, "It was none of their business whom I belonged to; I was trying to belong to myself." But before he could verbally sever his enslavement to the land, he had to do so physically. Jackson's fascinating memoir shows us how he did so through a traceable, mappable flight—and then, after the war, how he reclaimed that landscape on wholly different terms.



The Flight from Sumter

Although many accounts of runaway slaves from the antebellum South survive, the story of John Andrew Jackson's escape is something special. Finding an advertisement calling for the capture of a specific person is rare in slave history, but we have found a detailed one seeking Jackson. We can use that advertisement alongside his own account of his escape, and our own geographical understanding of the region, to triangulate his *multiple* routes to freedom. Not only can his specific and vague references to landmarks help us re-imagine his route over rivers and roads, thus validating his claims, but we can also discov-

*Jackson did not know of or did not choose to join any of the "Maroons" communities of runaway slaves who were known throughout the 18th and early 19th century to live in the deep backwoods and swamps in the South. The Black River and the Santee river of South Carolina were notorious for harboring runaway communities who both literally and figuratively often reclaimed and redefined swamp land for small settlements and agricultural use. Jackson likely passed close to such territory, however, which makes his independent determination to flee all the more powerful. For a thoughtful consideration of the culture of Maroons in South Carolina, see *Maroon Communities in South Carolina: A Documentary Record*, Timothy James Lockley, editor (Charleston: University of South Carolina Press, 2009).



A detail of the Law and English plantations.
Robert Mills, *Atlas*, 1825

er how freedom-seekers like Jackson manipulated their *enslavers'* notions of flight.

In other words, Jackson didn't run the way his former masters thought he would run. Nor, later in life, did he run in the way *we* might imagine him running. His path provides us with a unique glimpse into how one slave lived out his lifelong imaginary navigation of his surroundings and inner life. It reveals a multi-layered meaning of landscape that Jackson believed he could reclaim before he died, and that we might still reclaim for him today.

The particulars of Jackson's storied life are as follows: he was born in Sumter District, South Carolina in about 1825 and was owned by Robert English, a successful landowner with various properties and a host of relatives to share and trade slaves with. The plantation Jackson lived on was in a town once known as English Crossroads, later as Magnolia, and finally as Lynchburg. Despite a brutal life of labor and abuse, he found some brief happiness with Louisa, a young woman he married who lived on a nearby plantation owned by the Law family. His owners objected to his marriage and to his spending time with his wife and Jenny, the daughter Jackson and Louisa conceived. Despite repeated whippings for leaving his plantation to be with Louisa, Jackson remained devoted to his family and determined to keep crossing the land between the English and Law plantations.

In 1846, however, Jenny and Louisa were sold or sent to Houston County, Georgia. Jackson's devastation knew no bounds, and he resolved to use the rapidly-degrading sanity of Robert English to his advantage. With his owner collapsing into dementia, oversight and discipline of the plantation were lax. Jackson began to hatch a plan for escape. If he couldn't join Jenny and Louisa, he would escape slavery entirely and perhaps someday, somehow be reunited.

Jackson managed to trade some chickens for a pony that a neighboring slave had somehow obtained. He hid the pony deep in the woods. On

Christmas day, he took advantage of the customary three-day holiday and fled on horseback for Charleston. He had often been to Charleston to drive his master's cattle to market and knew the route well. Unlike many fugitives forced to brave unknown terrain, Jackson's flight to Charleston was through familiar turf.

It was still dangerous, however, and while he had not worked out the details of what precisely he would do in Charleston, simply and plausibly traveling the over 100 miles of main roads to the city was going to be his greatest challenge. Jackson's flight over that landscape was thus both typical and atypical of the larger fugitive slave experience.

Fugitives from slavery each had their own horrible story to tell and their own circumstances that led them to seek freedom though "self-theft," to use the parlance of runaway advertisements in newspapers of the time. But there are some general patterns within the flights of men and women enslaved in the inland South.

To begin with, a vast majority of runaways likely left without any specific plans to abscond north. Rather, they were often fleeing immediate punishment or danger with the intent of returning once the circumstances or threat had changed. A northern escape was a colossal undertaking for people enslaved in the Deep South who had little access to trains or boats. The geographic challenges alone were huge.

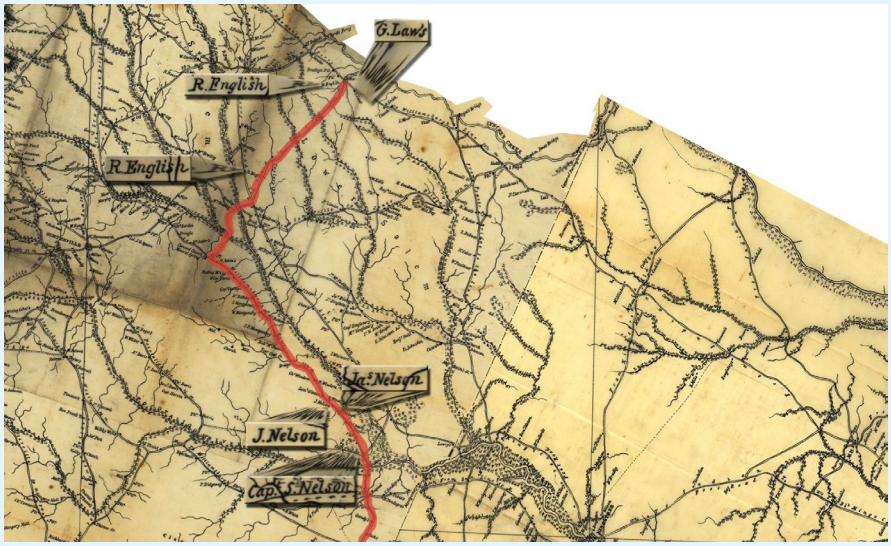
Another common motivation for short-term flight, sometimes termed *petit marronage*, was what took Jackson to visit Louisa; individuals would leave their plantations to see parents or spouses for limited periods of time. This resistance-through-flight was dangerous, of course, for punishments upon return could be murderous. Whether calculated or impulsive, those kinds of flight were still powerful acts of defiance that indicated to overseers or masters that some treatment would not be endured. Despite threats of violence and cruelty, men and women still held some negotiating power: labor was a temporal force, and it meant more at planting or harvest time. If a person could hide for even a week or two, they could deprive their master of labor at an exceptionally critical moment. Punishing that slave too harshly upon their return could be only a pyrrhic victory.*

*A thoughtful yet succinct overview of petite and grande marronage can be found in "Diasporic Marronage" in the *Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: A Historical Encyclopedia* page 384-386 by Jorge L. Chinea Editor Carole Elizabeth Boyce Davies 2008 Santa Barbara California: ABC-CLIO.

Jackson's flight this time, though, was the less common form of escape: a *grand marronage*. He was heading south to Charleston, with plans to then head north for permanent freedom. He had no knowing assistance from anyone, black or white, and he traveled on the roads in plain sight on a pony.

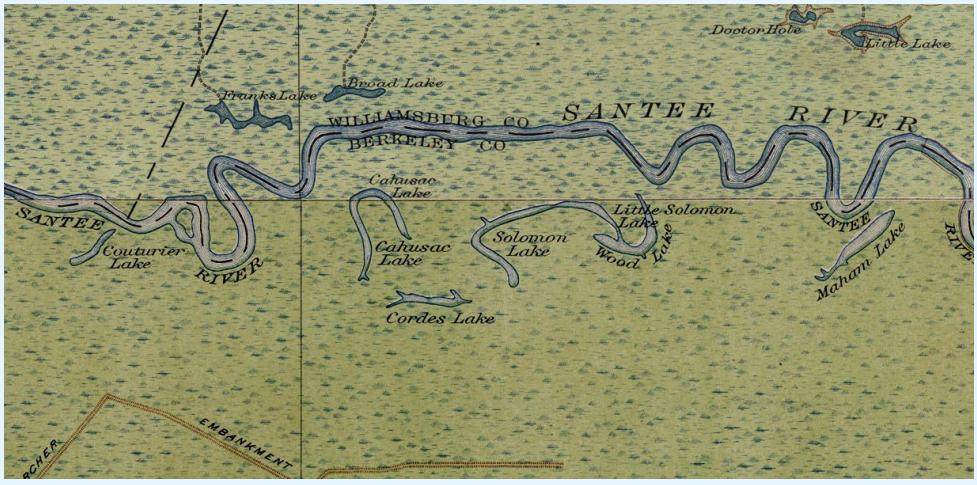


Jackson navigated three kinds of terrain. The first, he imagined and flew over as a bird. The second was the actual historical space of South Carolina and points north that the maps below retrace. Jackson navigated its four essential stages:



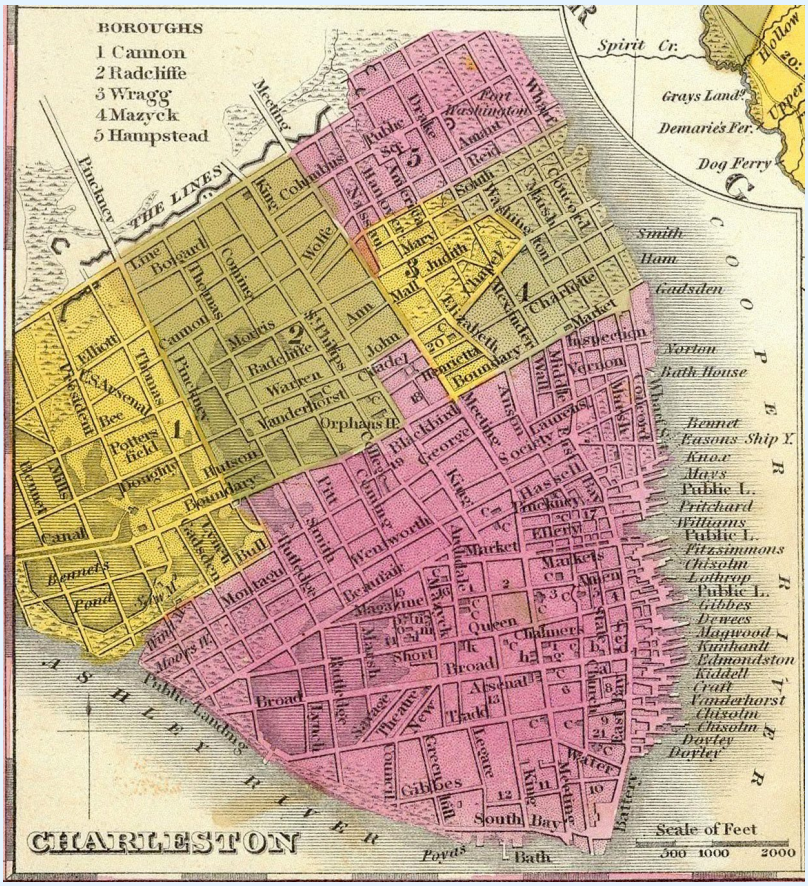
Robert Mills, *Atlas*, 1825

Christmas Eve, 1846: Jackson travels through the woods on his pony, stopping at G. Nelson's plantation: I hastened to the woods and started on my pony. I met many white persons, and was hailed, "You nigger, how far are you going?" To which I would answer, "To the next plantation, mas're." But I took good care not to stop at the next plantation. The first night I stopped at G. Nelson's plantation. I stopped with the negroes, who thought I had go leave during Christmas.



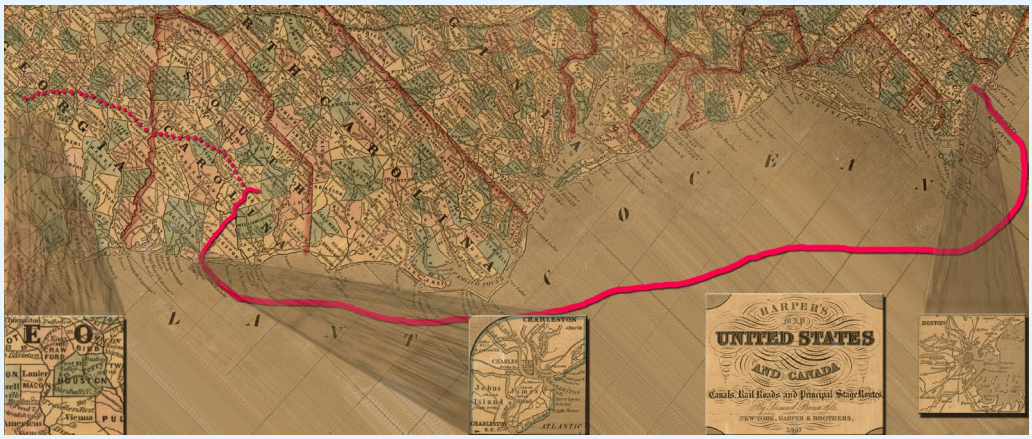
Composite of USGS Topographic maps digitized by the University of Texas Perry-Castanada Library

Christmas Day, 1846: Jackson crosses the Santee River just east of the above stretch, then travels to Shipman's Hotel, leaving at midnight. Jackson probably crossed the swampy and twisting Santee one unmapped quarter mile to the west of this surveyor's close up: Next morning, before day, I started on for the Sante [sic] River. The negro who kept that ferry, was allowed to keep for himself all the money he took on Christmas day, and as this was Christmas day, he was only too glad to get my money and ask no questions; so I paid twenty cents, and he put me and my pony across the main gulf of the river, but he would not put me across to the "bob landing;" so that I had to wade on my pony through a place called "Sandy Pond" and "Boat Creek." The current was so strong there, that I and my pony were nearly washed down the stream; but after hard struggling, we succeeded in getting across. I went eight miles further, to Mr. Shipman's hotel, where one Jessie Brown, who hired me of my master, had often stopped. I stayed there until midnight , when I got my pony and prepared to start. This roused Mr. Shipman's suspicions, so he asked me where I belonged to. I was scared, but at length, I said, "Have you not seen me here with Jesse Brown, driving Cattle?" he said, "Yes I know Jesse Brown well. Where are you going?" I answered him, "I am going on my Christmas holiday." This satisfied him. I was going to take a longer holiday than he thought for.



David Rumsey Historical Map Collection

Jackson reaches Charleston, where he lives for approximately a month: I reached Charleston by the next evening.



Harper & Brothers 1847 Map of the United States by Samuel Breese

Jackson works at the wharfs, and eventually finds a boat to Boston: I joined a gang of negroes working on the wharfs, and received a dollar-and-a-quarter per day, without arousing any suspicion.

But there was a third terrain as well—the terrain he feigned, the verbal map he left to confuse any pursuers.

When questioned by white people he met along the road, for example, Jackson misdirected them:

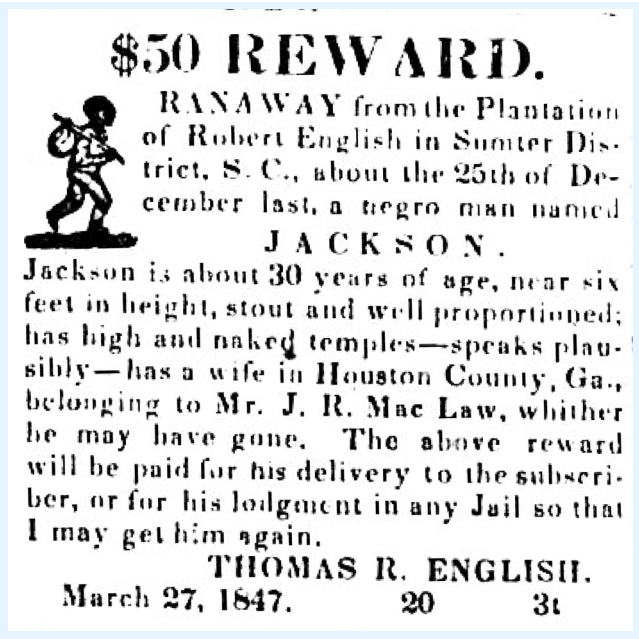
> I met many white persons and was hailed, "You nigger, how far are you going?" To which I would answer, "To the next plantation, mas're;" but I took good care not to stop at the next plantation.

His landscape was broad, and he was traveling far, but he when he spoke to white people he projected the microcosmic space they expected him to live in: traveling to the next plantation over. He became, at most, a slave running errands. (The population of free people of color in the decades right before the Civil War was small but significant, likely only a few thousand for the entire state. He thus may have also "passed" as an unchallenged freeman on the roads.)

Land and space weren't his only stage to act upon; he also played with time. When a suspicious innkeeper asked where he was headed, Jackson answered, "I am going on my Christmas holiday."

"This satisfied him," he added in his memoir. But "I was going to take a longer holiday than he thought for I reached Charleston next evening."

Jackson's greatest feint, however, may be in how he misdirected the Reverend Thomas English, his owner's son, who managed his father's plantation and its slaves. When we discovered the advertisement that the Reverend placed in the *Sumter Banner* in March of 1847, approximately four months after John Andrew Jackson fled, we realized how deeply English was fooled.



$50 REWARD.

RANAWAY from the Plantation of Robert English in Sumter District, S. C., about the 25th of December last, a negro man named

JACKSON.

Jackson is about 30 years of age, near six feet in height, stout and well proportioned; has high and naked temples—speaks plausibly—has a wife in Houston County, Ga., belonging to Mr. J. R. Mac Law, whither he may have gone. The above reward will be paid for his delivery to the subscriber, or for his lodgment in any Jail so that I may get him again.

THOMAS R. ENGLISH.

March 27, 1847. 20 3t

Reverend Thomas English's runaway slave advertisement for Jackson.

Jackson was able to escape in part because Thomas English was looking in the wrong direction. Rather than seek his wife to the west in Georgia, as English believed, Jackson had chosen to head *south*, to Charleston, a route he knew from previous work leading cattle.*

The timing of English's advertisement also suggests how terrain and speculative *marronage* were tied. While Jackson's disappearance was presumably discovered shortly after Christmas of 1846, the first advertisement for him didn't appear until *late March of 1847*. This lengthy time lapse suggests that English initially suspected

*The Reverend Thomas R. English's runaway slave advertisement for Jackson appeared in the *Sumter Banner* in March of 1847. While it is rare to be able to correlate this kind of documentation for a specific fugitive and it tells us much about the Reverend's perspective and, moreover, does indeed correlate with Jackson's own version of events, this interpretation shouldn't be allowed to define him. After all, while The Reverend English may have found Jackson to speak "plausibly" it seems doubtful he was ever able to genuinely hear Jackson. The misdirection (a probable route to Georgia) indicated within this advertisement also provides powerful evidence for the strategic maneuvers and resistance practiced by people desperate to elude enslavers and oppression.

a case of *petite marronage*, wherein Jackson had merely fled temporarily to avoid a whipping and would soon return. Only after a few months did Thomas English place the advertisement speculating that Jackson had fled over 300 miles to Houston County, Georgia. By then, however, Jackson had already worked for a month on the docks in Charleston before stowing away on a Boston-bound vessel, thus making it North, to freedom.*



Reclamation

English misjudged Jackson's strategy, his temporal plans, and his vision of the terrain. But the slaveholder did get one thing right: Jackson would work for years and at great risk to himself in a futile attempt to free his family.‡

Jackson's life after his escape from South Carolina was rich and complex. He labored in Massachusetts for a few years, desperately saving money and networking with abolitionists in order to negotiate the purchase of his wife and baby girl, still enslaved in Georgia. Yet after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, Jackson quickly realized the danger he was in. His master had been making inquiries about him up North, and had commissioned a sort of bounty hunter or agent to track him down. He had to give up on purchasing or ever reuniting with his family. This time, with the assistance of conductors on the Underground Railroad, Jackson made his way north to Canada, where he settled amongst the free black population of St John, New Brunswick.

Jackson married again in Canada and a few years later sailed to England where he lectured for several years about slavery, publishing his memoir *The Experience of a Slave in South Carolina* in 1862. He chose to return to the United States after the Civil War and spent his remaining years with a third wife in Springfield, Massachusetts. He regularly traveled to and from South Carolina over the next 30 years, seeking to alleviate the plight of the freed men and women there. Jackson collected donations for clothes, farm equipment, money, and food for orphans and the destitute in Lynchburg, the township of his former plantation.

Ending there, however, underemphasizes Jackson's determination to link land to his freedom. An 1866 newspaper notice in the *Springfield Republican* reveals the audacious coda that Jackson attempted to give to his life—and to the land where once he was a slave:

> John Andrew Jackson, formerly a slave and a fugitive from the South, and lately from Europe, is in this vicinity receiving clothing and supplies to send to the destitute negroes, through the aid society, at No. 76 John Street, New York. *He is also trying to raise funds to purchase his old master's plantation*, so that the former slaves may go to work on it, on their own account. He comes plentifully indorsed, and is apparently worthy of assistance in the causes he represents.
> [italics ours]

John Andrew Jackson wasn't merely returning to a region where he had friends and relatives. He was trying to purchase back the very land on which he had picked cotton, the site where his sister had been

*The advertisement was scheduled to appear 3 times a week—hence the '3t' at its bottom right.

‡As part of the Compromise of 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act was a federal law designed to placate the South that was increasingly concerned by the weak enforcement of earlier fugitive slave laws. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 forced and rewarded Northern law enforcement officers to aid in the capture of escaped slaves. People aiding these freedom seekers were liable to face often very serious criminal sanctions. Other controversial aspects of the Act were the elimination of a jury decision for a captured slave, who was brought before a federal court or a commissioner and rarely allowed to submit testimony upon their behalf. Instead, testimony from the alleged owner, who was not even required to be present, was the most heavily-weighed evidence.

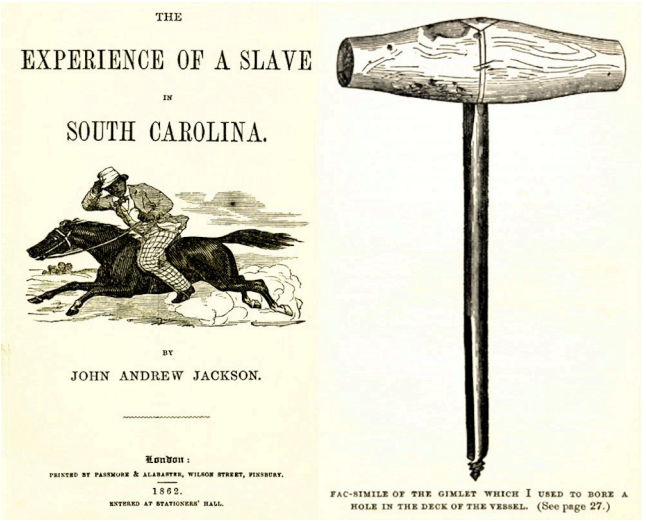
murdered, the farm where his mother was repeatedly whipped and where he himself had been brutalized. Jackson's land claim was one born in blood.

As he stated during the escape: "I belong to South Carolina." It wasn't an idea he forgot. In an interview of 1893 he told a reporter that he longed to return to South Carolina to die:

> ... I'm getting old and feeble and I only want to live till I get the money for the Home, and then I will go down to Old Carliny and there is where I want to die, down in my old cabin home.

We can perhaps best understand his intent to reclaim his landscape, the land he had painted with his blood, by looking at the anecdote that closes his entire memoir—the final image to which he, and his readers, must bear witness. In this final passage he tells of a local Sumter slave owner, "Old Billy Dunn" who had whipped a man to death

> ... and dug a hole in the field, and threw him in without coffin or anything of the kind, just as dogs are buried; and in the course of time, the niggers ploughed up the bones, and said, "Brudder, this the place where Old Billy Dunn buried one of his slaves that was flogged to death."
>
> I, John Andrew Jackson, once a slave in the United States have seen and heard all this, therefore I publish it.
>
> J. A. Jackson.


THE

EXPERIENCE OF A SLAVE

IN

SOUTH CAROLINA.

BY

JOHN ANDREW JACKSON.

London:

PRINTED BY PASSMORE & ALABASTER, WILSON STREET, FINSBURY.

1862.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

FAC-SIMILE OF THE GIMLET WHICH I USED TO BORE A HOLE IN THE DECK OF THE VESSEL. (See page 27.)

The title page and an illustration from Jackson's memoir, *The Experience of a Slave in South Carolina* (London, 1862). Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina

Landscape / Escape

So did Jackson actually return to die in South Carolina? It's hard to say.

He may not have succeeded in buying the exact plantation he had worked, but he did for at least some period own a small parcel of land about six miles from the English family home. As *The Watchman and Southron* reported in August of 1894, the land of John Andrew Jackson was to be sold for taxes owed.

But had he lived there? His last known location dates to 1896, when the *New York Herald Tribune* remarked that "John Andrew Jackson lost his satchel in New York City November 18 in Water-st., containing all his clothes; please return to Police Headquarters." Since Jackson had lost things in previous years and advertised for them in newspapers, this final trace rings true. He may have died there; it's hard to imagine him returning to South Carolina in his destitute or elderly state.

And yet, for a man who against all expectations had traveled the world,

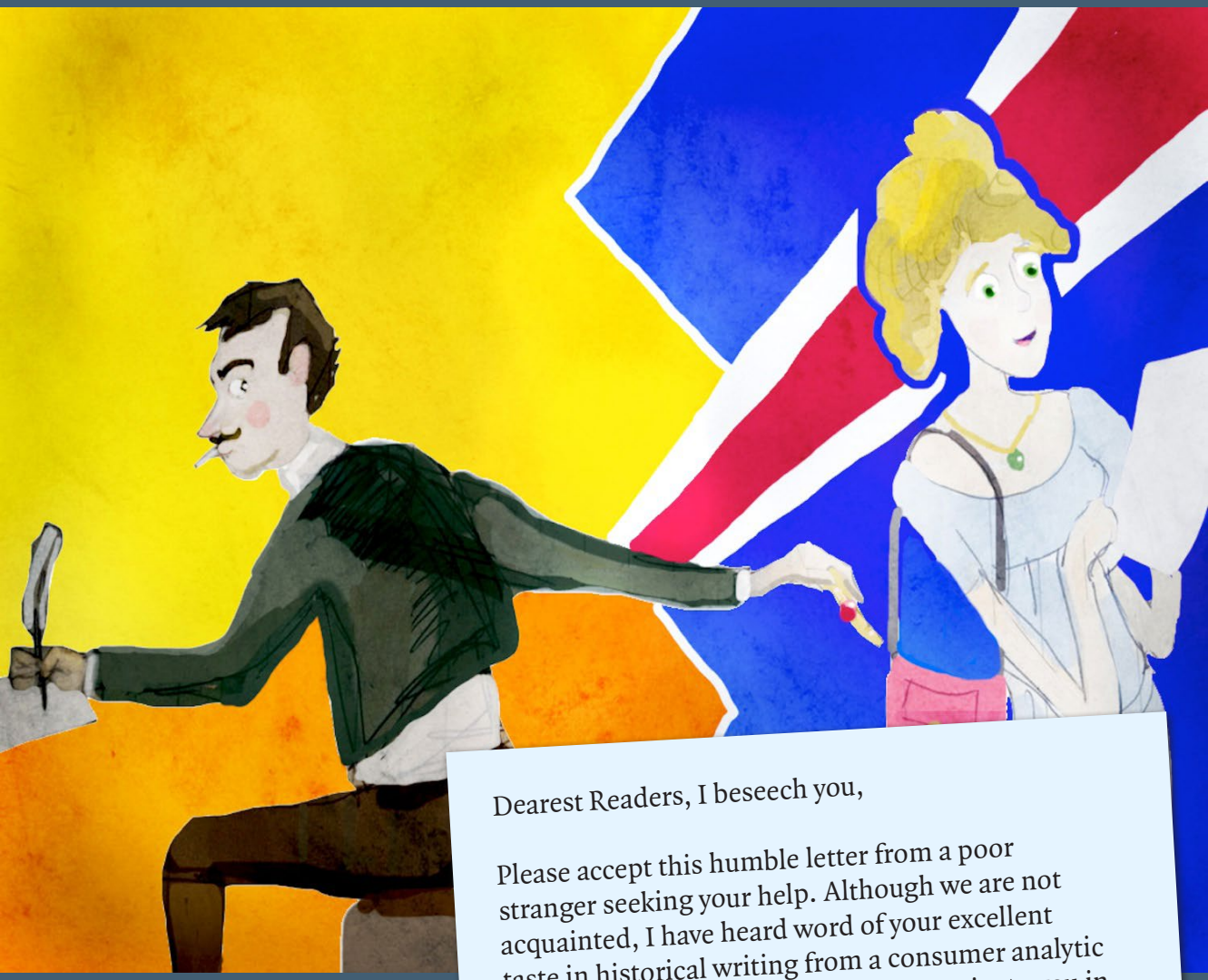
this kind of final and triumphant return still seems believable—especially if we see that return to his primal landscape as the final stage of his escape.

We generally associate 'landscape' with 'escape' only inasmuch as landscape is something to be crossed or triumphed over in order to achieve escape. Perhaps it hinders or perhaps it assists the escape. The close sounds of the term might also lead us to associate the natural world as itself an "escape" from an unnatural world.

That association, however, is more fraught and complex than instincts suggest. Despite being close cognates, the 'landscape' and 'escape' have fundamentally distant origins. 'Landscape' arises from the Dutch term *landschape* which suggests a state of being of the land. Initially it was used as a painterly term, the artistic perspective or creation of the land's very essence or state of being. ('-Scape' here functions as a form of '-ship' as it might appear in more familiar terms such as 'friendship' or 'seamanship.' Only in the last century or so has it taken on the modern sense of it as 'arrangements of natural forms.') 'Escape' however, comes from Old French: the term *eschaper*, essentially the removal of a cloak, presumably in order to flee.

The terms share no linguistic lineage, but their overlap is telling. Escape's origins are revelatory: the unmasking/uncloaking that can allow one to run. Landscape's painterly origins, which convey a state of being, actually complement the notion of escaping as revelation. Jackson remade the land precisely because he escaped from it. Jackson may never have been able to purchase his master's land, but he remained invested in it through human bondage, the blood he left behind, the bones he remembered—and flight.

Susanna Ashton is grateful to the University of South Carolina's Lewis P. Jones Visiting Research Fellowship at the South Caroliniana Library as well as Clemson University's Cyber Institute which supported this work.



Proto-Spam:
Spanish Prisoners and Confidence Games

Robert Whitaker

Dearest Readers, I beseech you,

Please accept this humble letter from a poor stranger seeking your help. Although we are not acquainted, I have heard word of your excellent taste in historical writing from a consumer analytic program that knows you quite well. I write to you in the most desperate of circumstances to ask you to help secure my freedom. I sit now in a cell within a modernist dungeon known as a 'library,' imprisoned after failing to heed common sense and attending graduate school in the humanities. The machinations of my enemies have forestalled correspondence with my next of kin, but the editors of *The Appendix* have kindly agreed to forward this letter to you. My imprisonment prevents the publication of my historical monograph, which would surely collect no less than $100,000,000,000 on the open market. I offer a portion of this sum to you in return for a small advance on your part. I will discuss the specifics of my request at the end of this letter, but please begin by considering the following sample of my final work.

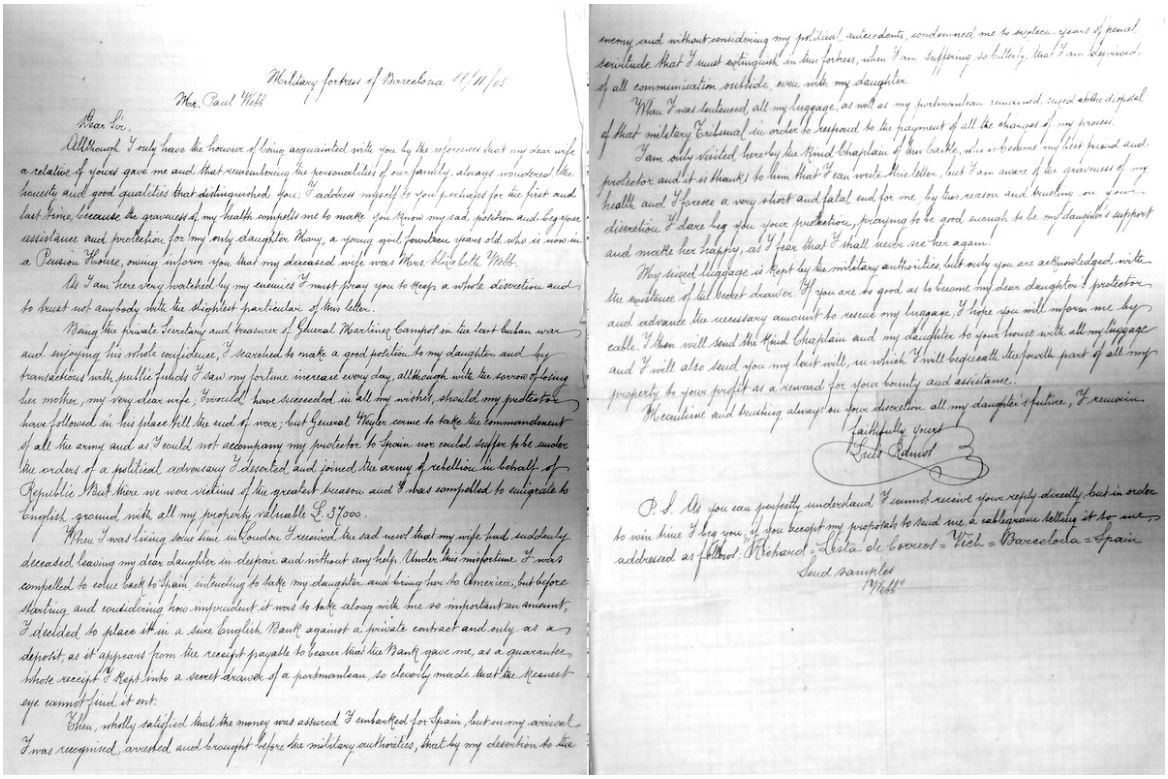
My writing concerns the history of advance fee fraud, better known as the "Spanish Prisoner Scheme." In this confidence trick, the criminal contacts the victim offering a large sum of money, or other comparable treasure, in return for a small advance of funds that the criminal—posing as a distressed yet reputable person—cannot provide because of some impediment (usually imprisonment or illness). Readers with an email account have undoubtedly encountered a variation of this scheme. The proliferation of the Nigerian Letter or 419 scam during the late twentieth century encouraged the development of spam filters. While early iterations of this electronic grift were accompanied by preposterous stories involving Nigerian royalty, recent versions have made the scheme more credible by hacking the email accounts of the law-abiding and using their lives as the basis for letters sent to individuals on their contact list.

*A comment troll is someone that leaves purposefully insulting comments on Internet articles or forums to illicit a strong emotional response from other commenters. Think of them as the prank callers of the Internet age. Twitter bots are twitter accounts operated by computer programs deigned to inflate the number of followers for a particular account, usually the account of a corporation or celebrity. The profile pictures for twitter bots are often taken from online advertisements, without the knowledge of the photographer or the person that was photographed. Twitter bots avoid deletion by occasionally tweeting gibberish and following accounts other than the account that they are designed to inflate. A catfish is someone that creates a fake social media profile using an attractive picture and biographical information in order to engage in a relationship, usually romantic, with a real person. The term comes from the 2010 documentary of the same name, *Catfish*.

‡Last year, Manti Te'o, a linebacker for the University of Notre Dame, rose to national prominence for his play on the field as well as his personal story of loss. In September 2012, Te'o told Sports Illustrated in an interview that his grandmother and girlfriend died on the same day earlier that month. Te'o's story won him sympathy from the sporting press, and helped add to his campaign as a Heisman Trophy finalist. In January 2013, Deadspin revealed that the death of his girlfriend was not only fake, but that his girlfriend was actually a catfish operated by a male acquaintance of Te'o's. Te'o had learned of the hoax in December, but continued to mention his girlfriend's death in the weeks preceding his participation in the National Championship game in January.

The success of this con may appear, at first, to rely entirely on elements intrinsic to an Internet age awash in attention-seeking anonymity. We hear stories almost daily about marks getting duped by a comment troll, twitter bot, or catfish relationship. Yet compared to the historical versions of this swindle, our current Spanish Prisoners only differ in their method of delivery. The past is filled with Manti Te'os, and many of them suffered fates much worse than a broken heart and declining NFL draft stock. The enduring success of the prisoner swindle relies as much on the mark's sentimentality and need for emotional connection as it does on their desire for a quick buck. The successful prisoner, then, is one that can combine a too-good-to-be-true offer with a compelling narrative that the victim can, literally, buy into.*‡

One of the best sources for Spanish Prisoner letters from the past can be found in the files of the Foreign Office (FO) and Metropolitan Police (MEPO) at the British National Archives. Britain has long been a target of the Spanish Prisoner, dating back at least to the Peninsular War in the early nineteenth century. Waves of the scam hit the island every twenty years or so afterward, as clever criminals used the backdrop of successive Spanish civil wars, known collectively as the Carlist Wars, to spin tales of wrongful imprisonment, political intrigue, and hidden treasure for their victims. It should be noted that many of these criminals probably did not write from Spain. In fact, as some members of the Met surmised, many of these "prisoners" were writing from England. Spain's criminal reputation then, not unlike Nigeria's reputation today, was as much the indirect result of endemic



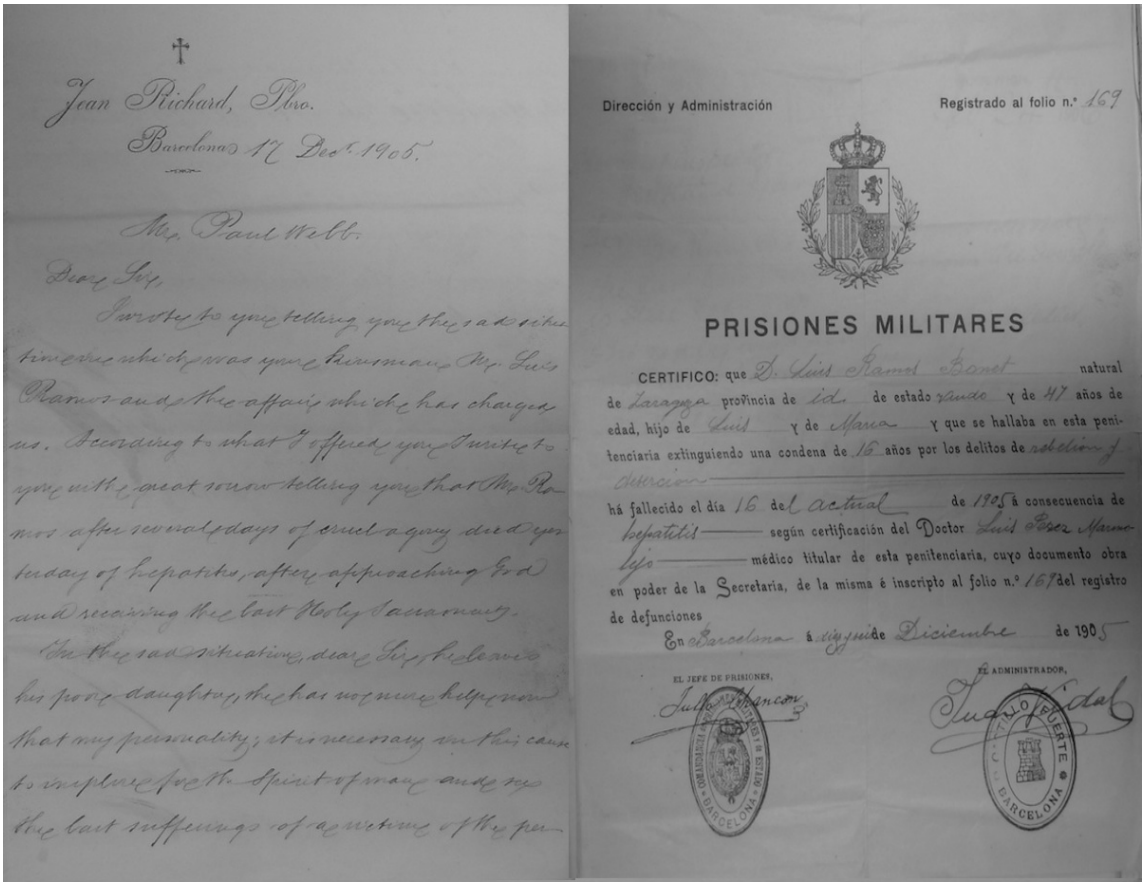
The letter of Luis Ramos, 1905.
National Archives of the United Kingdom

conflict as of actual wrongdoing. Nevertheless, the fact that some of these first letters originated from Spain makes the prisoner scheme one of the earliest and most enduring examples of international crime.*‡

What is remarkable about these letters from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is their level of craftsmanship, both with regard to the prisoner's narrative as well as the physical trappings of the letters themselves. Take for instance the series of letters sent to Mr. Paul Webb, a Sloane Street shopkeeper, in 1905. Using above average diction and writing in a pleasant cursive, the prisoner "Luis Ramos" implores Mr. Webb to send funds to assist and protect his daughter, "a young girl of fourteen years old who is now in a Prison House." Ramos, drawing from recent history, explains that he was the private secretary of General Martinez Campos during "the last Cuban war," but owing to the replacement of Campos by Valeriano Weyler—"a political adversary"—Ramos left the army and joined the rebellion on behalf of the republic. Thanks to "the greatest treason," Ramos was "compelled to emigrate to English ground with all my property valuable £37.000." He decided to return home after the death of his wife in order to take care of his daughter Mary. Ramos tells Webb that he left for Spain after depositing his

*Foreign Office examples include FO 227/8, FO 72/2027-28, FO 72/2140, FO 72/2228, FO 371/24218. This essay will draw on examples from the files of the Metropolitan Police, National Archives of the United Kingdom (hereafter NA).

‡Britain, of course, was not the only victim of this scheme. Lawrence Gooley considers a version of the fraud that targeted people living around the Adirondacks during the early twentieth century.



Jean Richard, Pbro.
Barcelona 17 Dec.r 1905.

Mr. Paul Webb.

Dear Sir,

I wrote to you telling you the sad situation which was your fellowman Mr. Luis Ramos and the affairs which he has charged us. According to what I offered you I write to you with great sorrow telling you that Mr. Ramos after several days of cruel agony died yesterday of hepatitis, after approaching God and receiving the last Holy Sacrament.

On the sad situation, dear Sir, he leaves his poor daughter, that has no one to help now that my personality is necessary in this case to implore for the Spirit of mercy and to the last sufferings of agonizing of the pa-

Dirección y Administración — Registrado al folio n.º 169

PRISIONES MILITARES

CERTIFICO: que D. Luis Ramos Sanz natural de Zaragoza provincia de id. de estado casado y de 47 años de edad, hijo de Luis y de María y que se hallaba en esta penitenciaria extinguiendo una condena de 16 años por los delitos de rebelion y detencion

há fallecido el día 16 del actual de 1905 á consecuencia de hepatitis según certificación del Doctor Luis Perez Marmolejo médico titular de esta penitenciaria, cuyo documento obra en poder de la Secretaria, de la misma é inscripto al folio n.º 169 del registro de defunciones

En Barcelona á diez y seis de Diciembre de 1905

EL JEFE DE PRISIONES,

EL ADMINISTRADOR,

Richard's supporting documents.
National Archives of the United Kingdom

money "in a sure English Bank," but was intercepted by the authorities upon disembarking and placed in a military prison in Barcelona. Complaining of an illness and certain that he will have "a very short and fatal end," Ramos begs Webb to send funding that will release his daughter and his confiscated luggage, which contains the receipt for his English bank account in a secret drawer.

Webb responded to this correspondence by telegraphing Ramos's designated intermediary, a prison chaplain named "Jean Richard," to inquire about the situation. This telegraph led to another Ramos letter, which reiterated his impending death as well as his fear that his political enemies would surely find and punish his daughter if help did not arrive soon. Ramos also warned Webb not to alert authorities in Spain or Britain as it would put his child at risk. This second Ramos letter, however, broke the drama, as it was sent to Webb, but addressed to a Mr. Thomas McGill, no doubt another potential target for the scheme. The criminal compounded the mistake by sending the same letter, now addressed to Webb, four days later. A follow-up letter was sent the next week in which Ramos wrote, "I feel that my life is going away...I have made my will by which I name my daughter my only heiress, appointing you her guardian." He would "write no more, [as] neither my head nor my hand allow it to me; I pray you to forget not my prayer and to abandon us not as we have but you to save my poor Mary of her distress."

That same day, Webb received a message from "Jean Richard," the impostor prison chaplain, written in a different hand on what appears to be church stationery.

This letter verified the points of Ramos's story, and encouraged Webb to act, promising "God will protect you." After nearly a month of silence, Richard wrote again to tell Webb that "Mr. Ramos, after several days of cruel agony died yesterday of hepatitis, after approaching God and receiving the last Holy Sacraments." The chaplain included in this letter a copy of Ramos's will, his death certificate, and a Spanish newspaper notice regarding the prisoner's death. This final letter was the first to mention the advance needed from Webb in order to free Mary and Ramos' luggage: £59. Webb, however, did not fall for the ruse, and reported the correspondence to the Metropolitan Police (Met) the following week.

In the "Ramos" letters we have all the elements of a classic Victorian drama: faced with the death or imprisonment of parents, a child seeks a new guardian to share a large inheritance amidst the backdrop of continental political intrigue. The drama is reinforced by the educated content and sophisticated appearance of the writing as well as a seemingly genuine collection of supporting documents. Webb's telegraph after the first letter shows that, even if he was still skeptical, he believed the correspondence could be real. The criminal, though, squandered his chance by addressing the next letter to the wrong person.

"Ramos" made even worse mistakes, however. After receiving a long and detailed "Ramos" letter addressed to Mr. William Topley, the partners of Wm. Topley & Sons wrote to Scotland Yard informing them of the correspondence and explaining that the company's namesake had been dead for over twenty years. A year later, Mrs. Mary Bates brought the police a similar letter addressed to her husband, who had passed away seven years before. Mr. Harry Robertson of Mincing Lane wrote the Met with another example in 1908. Robertson explained that this was the fourth such letter he had received in his life, but the first to switch his Christian name and surname (Dear Robertson Harry), and to claim familiarity through the prisoner's deceased wife (Mrs. Mary Harry)—a "new and rather amusing" touch, Robertson smirked. Other potential victims were not so amused, and went to great lengths to see that something was done. William Thomlinson, a mining executive based in British Columbia, wrote to Scotland Yard complaining about a prisoner letter and declaring, "if you are in touch with the authorities in Spain, perhaps these fakers can be caught and put to honest work, in jail."



Yet for the many of Ramos's letters that missed their mark, just as many found willing victims. "About 16th January last," wrote Superintendent Gordon of the Stirlingshire Constabulary, "Mrs. Margaret McAllister…received letter No. 1 of the enclosures [from "Jean Richard Pbro"]… and cabled in reply that she agreed to co-operate with the writer." After receiving additional letters from Richard, "she sent a cheque for £60 payable to Jean Richard Pbro…She received letter No.7 dated 13th February in acknowledgement of the cheque; but although she immediately thereafter wrote asking for more information, she received no word." Gordon wondered if "there is a chance of getting at Jean Richard Pbro," and if "the Barcelona Police would act much more readily for [the Met] than for [Stirlingshire]." "It seems a pity," Gordon continued, "that there should be no way of getting at that scoundrel."

A similar situation confronted George and Mary Sophia Vooght of Cricklewood, who

> received a letter from a man signing himself as Alvaro de Guzman, stating he was in Prison at Murcia, Spain, undergoing twelve years imprisonment…and that he had a daughter who was in a college in Spain who

> he was anxious to have sent to England to be educated and to live under the care of Mr. Vooght.

Guzman claimed to be a relative of Vooght through Guzman's deceased wife Mary. "As Mr. Vooght had a sister Mary whom he had not seen for many years," Sergeant W. Kemp reported, "he induced his wife to write to Guzman, offering to accept the girl Amelia, and have charge of her." Guzman replied by requesting that Vooght send £200 to his intermediary, Chaplain Jose Roig, in order to secure the girl's safe passage and the collection of her inheritance. Mrs. Vooght, becoming suspicious, wrote to a Magistrate in Murcia, but received a letter from Jose Roig, stating that this letter had been handed to him and that Guzman had passed away since their last exchange. Roig wrote that he needed £115 to help process the passage of Guzman's estate to his daughter and her new guardians. Mrs. Vooght responded by sending the money, but did not receive a reply. Mr. Vooght then asked a friend to write to Roig asking for an explanation. Roig replied to this letter by "stating he was in Prison for some offence he could not explain, but required £35 more to enable him to bring Amelia to England."*

Mrs. Vooght went to the police after this letter, at which point Sergeant Kemp "informed [her] the whole thing was a swindle and that we could not assist her, beyond forwarding the documents to the British ambassador at Madrid." The British Embassy in Madrid, when they received word of these frauds, forwarded notices on to Spanish authorities, but warned that individuals living at the local addresses used by the criminals often "turn out to be mere innocent accessories to the fraud, who can prove their ignorance of the contents of the letters sent to their address; while the real swindlers remain uncaught, and continue their correspondence under a different name." The ability of these swindlers to intercept incoming letters from marks before they reached their local destination—as was the case with Mrs. Vooght's letter to the magistrate of Murcia—suggests that the "prisoners" were postal employees that handled foreign deliveries.‡

While most of these criminals eluded capture, authorities sometimes successfully foiled their correspondence campaigns. In one instance, the Spanish ambassador to Britain, Marquis de Villalobar, sent a list of addresses of potential British victims to Metropolitan Police Commissioner Edward Henry. The Met used this list to prevent at least one fraud aimed at Mr. Charles Clark, a London cycle dealer, who had already sent a positive reply to his first prisoner letter, but fortunately had not included any money. On other occasions, members of the public who suspicions had been aroused helped the police. In 1910, a member of the advertising department of *The Daily News* warned police that he had received a series of strange notices for inclusion in the paper's classified section and believed they could be related to fraud. The Met followed up with the individuals that had placed these ads, and found that they had each received a prisoner letter that instructed them to place

*There is no firm evidence that the Vooght's criminal was our friend "Ramos," but his modus operandi (prison, orphan, chaplain) certainly suggests this. Unfortunately, Mrs. Vooght's letter to the Magistrate is not contained in this file.

‡Again, there is a chance that these criminals could have been postal workers in Britain, but the fact that the envelopes containing these letters featured Spanish stamps and postmarks suggests otherwise. There is also the language of the letters, which feature grammatical mistakes that appear honest rather than planned.

their reply in the newspaper. The police responded by placing warnings regarding this fraud in post offices across the country. Of course, even with these precautions and examples of public vigilance, the letters continued to arrive. Not unlike victims of the scheme today, those who were duped often left the incident unreported out of embarrassment.*



As can be surmised from the Met's files, the Spanish Prisoner Scheme witnessed a notable surge in Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century. This increase was undoubtedly influenced by the greater ease and reliability of cross border communication as well as the recent Spanish-American War. The technique of using war as part of the dramatic background for these frauds continued throughout the twentieth century, most obviously during the Spanish Civil War, but also earlier during the First World War, when several prisoners claimed to be wealthy Belgian refugees who fled to Spain after the Siege of Liège. Certainly, this type of opportunistic criminality is not unfamiliar to modern readers in the aftermath of Katrina and Sandy.

Another development specific to Britain—though part of the long history of social media—played an important role in that era's upsurge of prisoner letters. Beginning in 1897, *Who's Who*—a publication you might call a precursor to Facebook—began to print fuller descriptions of prominent individuals that included short biographies and vitas alongside official addresses and club memberships. Much like your oversharing friends today, the pomposity and vanity of the British elite listed in *Who's Who* could place them in harm's way. That fact was evident in a series of prisoner letters from Mexico collected by the Metropolitan Police during the 1930s and 1940s. "Vincente Olivier" of Mexico City sent dozens of letters to the cream of British society, including prominent business executives, military officers, ministers, and politicians. "A person," Olivier's letters began, "who knows you and who has highly spoken about you [i.e. *Who's Who*] has impelled me trust to you [sic] a very delicate matter of which depends the entire future of my dear daughter, as well as my very existence."‡

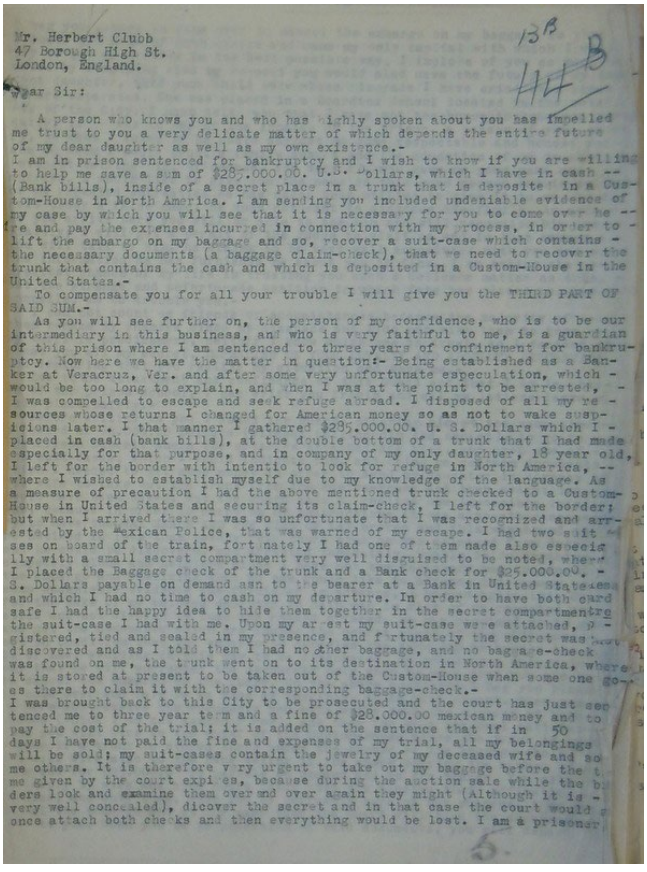
Olivier's letters followed the basic formula of Ramos's correspondence from decades earlier (prison, orphan, intermediary), but Olivier's typewriter allowed him to send a larger number of letters. Additionally, his use of *Who's Who* gave him a steady source of potential targets and helped him avoid making Ramos's frequent mistake of writing to the deceased. Although the Met never determined how Ramos chose his targets, his constant references to the deceased relatives of his letters' recipients could be a sign that the criminal laboriously scanned local death notices and obituaries for mention of residents with ties to Britain. Olivier's letters anticipated the modern spammer's preference for quantity over quality in prisoner letters. His work was hurried and only occasionally included the elaborate narratives

*Henry wrote back on August 7, 1908, thanking Villalobar for his list, but lamenting that even with this information the police are often "too late to prevent loss on the part of deluded persons."

‡Olivier's letters often featured no name other than an intermediary contact. On a few occasions he signed the name Albert L. Martin. These letters, however, all appear to have come from the same source, as they feature the same text, similar supporting documents, and seem to use the same typewriter.

and supporting documents developed by Ramos and other swindlers decades earlier. Ramos had been a criminal, but with a class and skill utterly lacking in the average bot scammer today. The effort he undertook in order to commit crime almost makes you wish you could give him money, if for no other reason than to reward him for his dedication to his nefarious work.

Though Olivier's letters lacked Ramos's panache, they retained the tactic of appealing as much to the victim's emotions and sentimentality as to their wallets. For those victims recently bereaved or simply lonely, the ability to lend aid to a dying man and his innocent daughter (who was presented as a possible distant relative) often led to a response. Certainly, other victims were taken in by the opportunity for fortune or by the drama of political intrigue that these letters provided. More often than not, however, successful letters worked because the victims believed the story and felt that they played a crucial role in it. Earlier this year, people expressed amazement that Manti Te'o could be in love with someone he'd never seen in person; imagine the public incredulity if he had agreed to be the guardian of a non-existent orphan child. And yet it seems equally possible. We are always looking for easy money, but we are perhaps even more eager for a good emotion.



Mr. Herbert Clubb
47 Borough High St.
London, England.

Dear Sir:

A person who knows you and who has highly spoken about you has impelled me trust to you a very delicate matter of which depends the entire future of my dear daughter as well as my own existence.-
I am in prison sentenced for bankruptcy and I wish to know if you are willing to help me save a sum of $285,000.00. U.S. Dollars, which I have in cash -- (Bank bills), inside of a secret place in a trunk that is deposited in a Custom-House in North America. I am sending you included undeniable evidence of my case by wich you will see that it is necessary for you to come over he -- re and pay the expenses incurred in connection with my process, in order to - lift the embargo on my baggage and so, recover a suit-case which contains - the necessary documents (a baggage claim-check), that we need to recover the trunk that contains the cash and which is deposited in a Custom-House in the United States.-
To compensate you for all your trouble I will give you the THIRD PART OF SAID SUM.-
As you will see further on, the person of my confidence, who is to be our intermediary in this business, and who is very faithful to me, is a guardian of this prison where I am sentenced to three years of confinement for bankruptcy. Now here we have the matter in question:- Being established as a Banker at Veracruz, Ver. and after some very unfortunate especulation, which - would be too long to explain, and when I was at the point to be arrested, - I was compelled to escape and seek refuge abroad. I disposed of all my re - sources whose returns I changed for American money so as not to wake suspicions later. I that manner I gathered $285.000.00. U. S. Dollars which I - placed in cash (bank bills), at the double bottom of a trunk that I had made especially for that purpose, and in company of my only daughter, 18 year old, I left for the border with intents to look for refuge in North America, -- where I wished to establish myself due to my knowledge of the language. As a measure of precaution I had the above mentioned trunk checked to a Custom-House in United States and securing its claim-check, I left for the border; but when I arrived there I was so unfortunate that I was recognized and arrested by the Mexican Police, that was warned of my escape. I had two suit - ses on board of the train, fortunately I had one of them made also especially with a small secret compartment very well disguised to be noted, where I placed the Baggage check of the trunk and a Bank check for $25.000.00. - S. Dollars payable on demand asn to the bearer at a Bank in United States and which I had no time to cash on my departure. In order to have both card safe I had the happy idea to hide them together in the secret compartment of the suit-case I had with me. Upon my arrest my suit-case were attached, - gistered, tied and sealed in my presence, and fortunately the secret was discovered and as I told them I had no other baggage, and no baggage-check was found on me, the trunk went on to its destination in North America, where it is stored at present to be taken out of the Custom-House when some one goes there to claim it with the corresponding baggage-check.-
I was brought back to this City to be prosecuted and the court has just sentenced me to three year term and a fine of $28.000.00 mexican money and to pay the cost of the trial; it is added on the sentence that if in 50 days I have not paid the fine and expenses of my trial, all my belongings will be sold; my suit-cases contain the jewelry of my deceased wife and some others. It is therefore very urgent to take out my baggage before the time given by the court expires, because during the auction sale while the bidders look and examine them over and over again they might (Although it is - very well concealed), dicover the secret and in that case the court would once attach both checks and then everything would be lost. I am a prisoner

Olivier's letter.
National Archives of the United Kingdom

Here ends my story. I would gladly share the remainder of my narrative with you in return for a formal book contract from an academic publisher that I can use to escape my imprisonment and secure my future wellbeing. If you are willing and able, please forward said contract to my intermediary Robert Whitaker, courtesy of *The Appendix*. Please hurry! My graduate student funding runs short!

Your Most Insincere Servant,
Caraboo Ponzi
Madoff-Meinertzhagen III, Esq

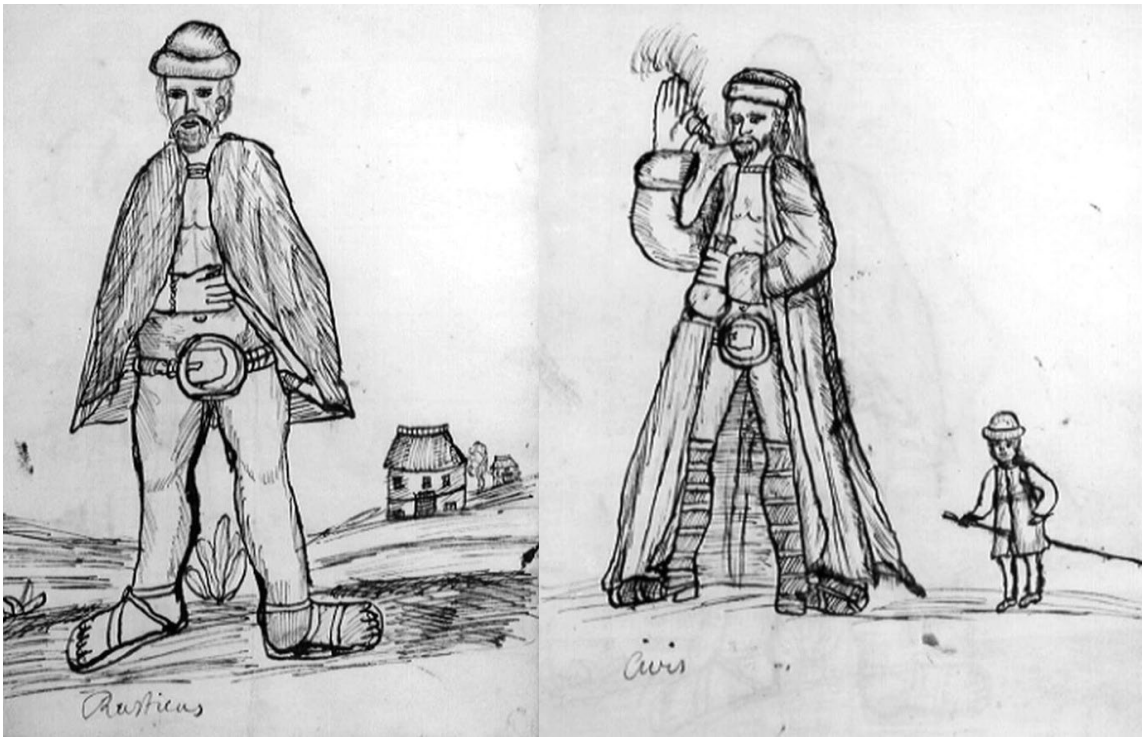


Made in Taiwan?:
An Eighteenth-Century Frenchman's Fictional Formosa

Benjamin Breen

A handsome youth with shoulder-length golden hair sits in a London garret, pondering. He is composing his first book—a work he believes will transform him from a penniless foreigner into a literary *cause celebré*. But first he must answer a self-imposed question: what do Taiwanese aristocrats eat for breakfast?

Inspiration hits, and his quill nib glides over linen paper. "All who can live without working, eat their Breakfasts about seven of the Clock in the Morning," the young man scribbles. "First they smoke a Pipe of Tobacco, then they drink *Bohea*, *Green* or *Sage Tea*; afterwards they cut off the Head of a Viper, and suck the Blood out of the Body." His quill pauses, waiting for the mixture of innocence and archness that



Psalmanazar's original sketches of various typical Formosans were discovered in Lambeth Palace Library in the 1960s by Frederic Foley.
Reproduced in Frederic Foley, *The Great Formosan Impostor* (1968)

comes so easily. "This, in my humble Opinion," he concludes, "is the most wholsom Breakfast a Man can make."

Roughly a year later, in a cluttered meeting chamber, a crowd presses around a periwigged physician as he exhibits a "foot of a human Body dried in Tenariffe" alongside a piece of Indian Ocean driftwood carved with cryptic letters. The assembled gentlemen, all fellows of the Royal Society, debate the plausibility of a letter written by a woman "who pretended to live without food." They scrutinize a rare prize from overseas: "the forked Penis... of the Male Opossum." A physician dissects the organ then and there, aiming to determine "to what *Species* in the Praedicament of Animals this Creature might properly be reduced."

*Having "observed the Penis to be fleshy, and to have no Bone in it," the dissecting physician concludes that "it cannot be referred to the Dog or Weasel kind" but that "a more perfect Enumeration and Description of the several sorts of Animals that are in the World" was required to say more.

A new invention—the world's first air pump capable of creating a vacuum—makes its debut, the fellows aware that the hand-blown glass bell topping the device could implode at any moment.*

At the evening's close, the same young man—his dreams of literary fame now fulfilled—stands to address the crowd of scientists and savants. An aging Isaac Newton sits at the head of the table. Upon catching sight of the speaker's pale skin and honey-colored locks, at least one member of the audience privately notes to himself that the foreigner seems to "look like a young Dutch-man." But the speaker declares that he is actually a native of one of the world's most remote and mysterious nations. In the twenty-first century we call it Taiwan;

in 1704 it was known to Europeans as "Formosa, an Island belonging to the Emperor of Japan." The man contends that he is a Formosan aristocrat, reared from infancy in the capitol city of Xternetsa and tutored in Greek by an evil Jesuit. He refuses to divulge his Formosan name, but he calls himself George Psalmanazar.*

Psalmanazar describes an island nation populated by a skillful and learned people. Yet it is a place which oscillates strangely between civility and savagery. His countrymen possess "a very sharp natural Wit" and are capable of making "Pictures with great Art and Skill," as well as porcelain dishes, a technology unknown to European craftsmen. Yet "they have no Shoe-makers, Brewers or Bakers," and they use crude pine torches for lighting. And although Formosan parents refuse to beat their children—a level of tolerance unknown in Europe—they are also capable of appalling violence. In the capital at Xternetsa, Psalmanazar calmly explains, his people have erected an enormous "Tabernacle" where they sacrifice infants to an ox-shaped god, to the tune of approximately 102,000 babies a year.

Clearly, starting their morning with fresh viper's blood wasn't the only thing that Formosans did differently.





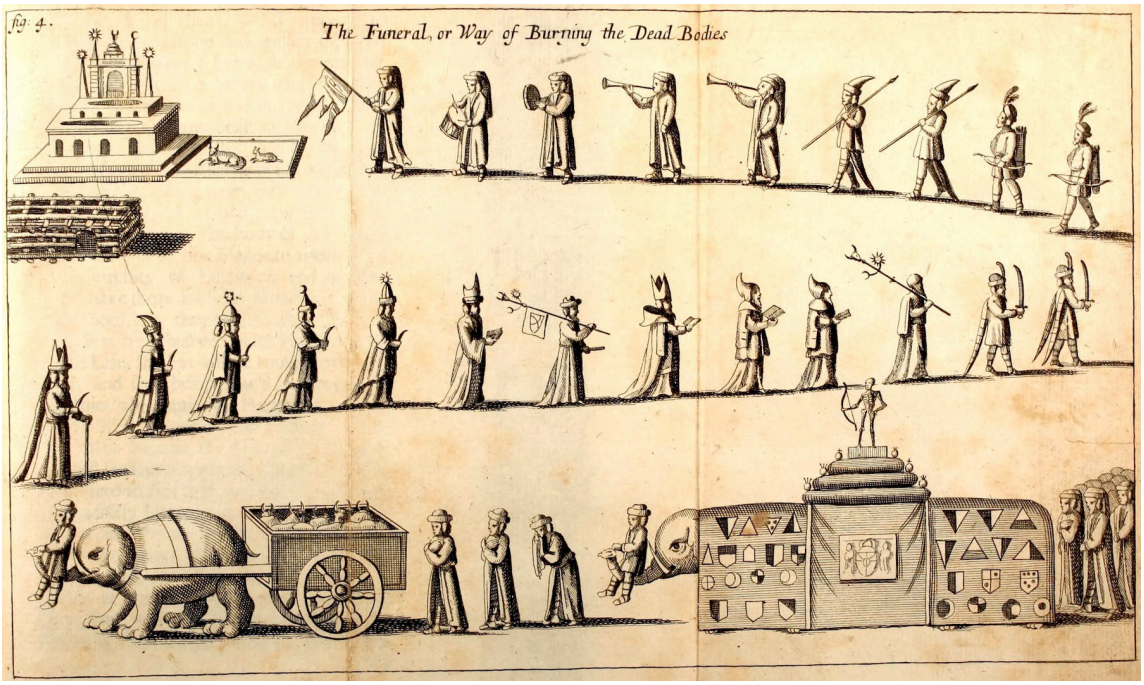
Who was this man? The available facts remain surprisingly slim. Despite hundreds of years of research by everyone from the father of British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli to contemporary scholars at Penn and the National Taiwan University, we still don't even know Psalmanazar's real name or place of origin (although he was likely from southern France). We know that elite figures ranging from the scientists of the Royal Society to the Bishop of London initially believed his claims, but he eventually fell into disgrace as competing experts confirmed that he was a liar. Beyond this, we move into the fictional realms that 'Psalmanazar,' like a Borges character come to life, summoned into existence with his voice and pen.

Fascinatingly, however, we also possess a confessional autobiography that an aged Psalmanazar wrote as an act of personal penance. *The Memoirs of ****, Commonly known by the Name of George Psalmanazar; a Reputed Native of Formosa* went to press in 1764, a year after its octogenarian author had died. In old age, Psalmanazar had abandoned his claims of Formosan origin, lamenting his "unaccountable pride, folly, and stupid villainy, in opposition to reason, religion, and all checks of conscience." Yet he still refused to reveal his real name or place of birth, and his old Formosan habits died hard—not least the "vast quantity of laudanum" (opium tincture) he continued to take on a daily basis, which Psalmanazar attributed to his "vanity and senseless affectation of singularity."‡

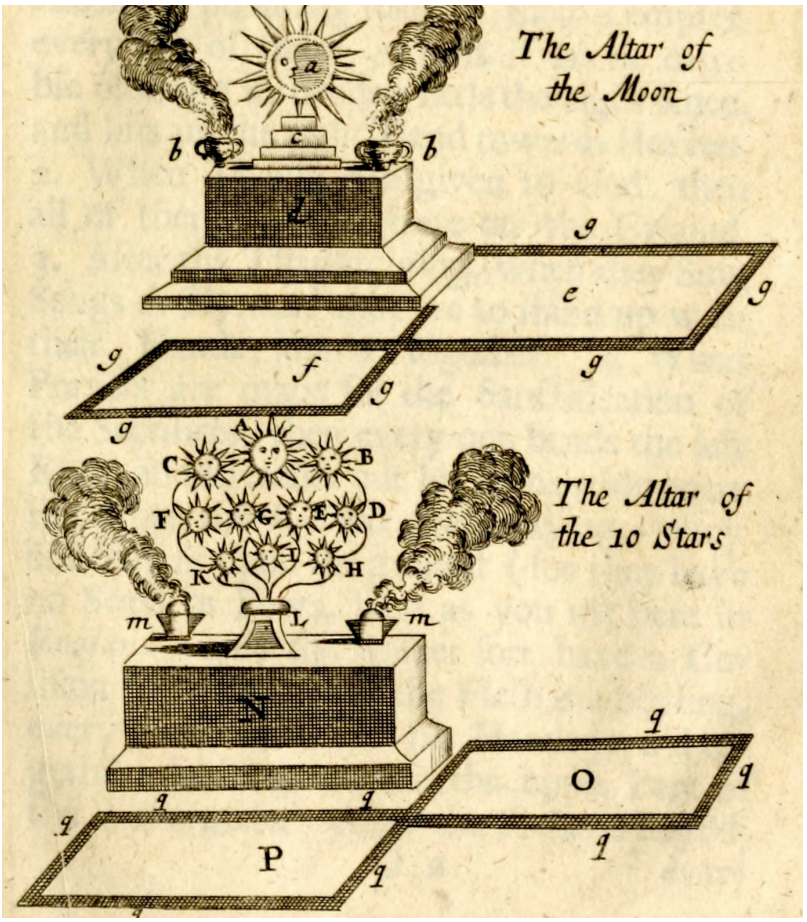
Posterity has treated Psalmanazar as little more than a literary footnote.

*Details from the Royal Society visit and other archival citations can be found in the journal article from which this piece was adapted, "No Man is an Island," in *The Journal of Early Modern History*.

‡The printed edition of the memoir was bundled with Psalmanazar's last will and testament, itself a remarkable document. The will contains instructions for how to find Psalmanazar's manuscript, directing his executors to "the deep drawer on the right hand of my white cabinet." Psalmanazar described the text as a "manuscript I thought myself in duty bound to leave behind [as] a faithful narrative."



A Formosan funeral procession from Psalmanazar's *Description of Formosa* (1704), p. 81.
The Internet Archive

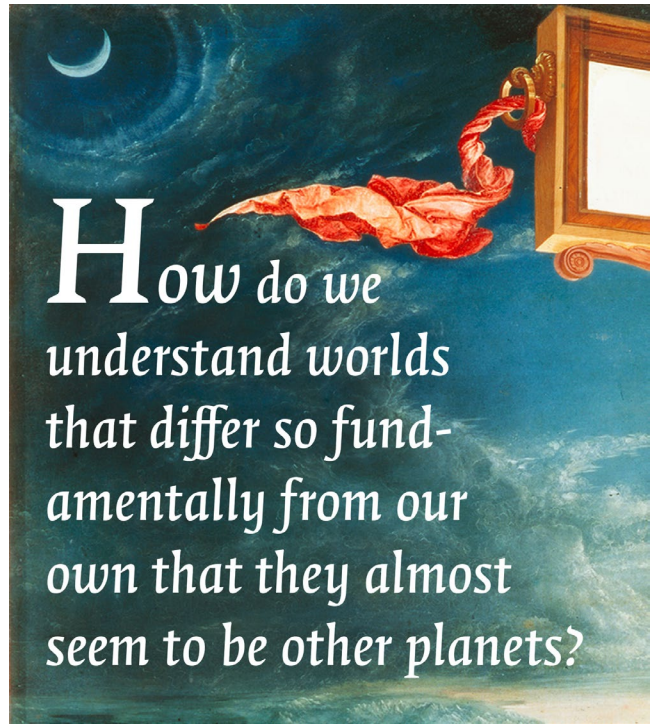


Psalmanazar's illustrations of the two of the holy altars where he claimed Formosan sacrifices took place, from page 194 of his *Description of Formosa* (1704).
The Internet Archive

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, authors would retell his story as either a humorous anecdote or a tragic tale, depending on their personal inclinations.

But is it also something more?

As an historian of early modern globalization and the drug trade, I first became interested in Psalmanazar due to his surprisingly detailed descriptions of opium addiction. Coming some sixty years before the far more famous account of Thomas de Quincey, they number among the earliest firsthand descriptions of recreational drug abuse in Western literature. I became hooked, however, by his inventions about Formosan culture—like his description of a sorcerer who prophesied that the appearance of "100 Birds Singing" in a nobleman's garden foretold that the souls of his "Deceas'd Relations had been Transform'd into Stars."*



As I devoured the immense creativity on display in *Description of Formosa*, it occurred to me that Psalmanazar was also telling us something fundamental about the origins of modernity. The world of seafarers, merchants, slaves, and transported criminals that created Europe's overseas empires was built upon elaborate fictions, from Prester John to Jonathan Swift.

Although the scale and singularity of his deception made him unique, Psalmanazar was also representative: while he was inventing tales of Formosan cannibalism, his peers were writing falsified histories of pirate utopias, parodic accounts of islands populated by super-intelligent horses, and sincere descriptions of demonic sacrifices.

These works raised profound questions about the nature of truth and fiction. Is the act of travel also an act of authorship, of inventing a reality that we each filter through our individual preconceptions? How do we understand worlds that differ so fundamentally from our own that they almost seem to be other planets? (It is no coincidence that the earliest

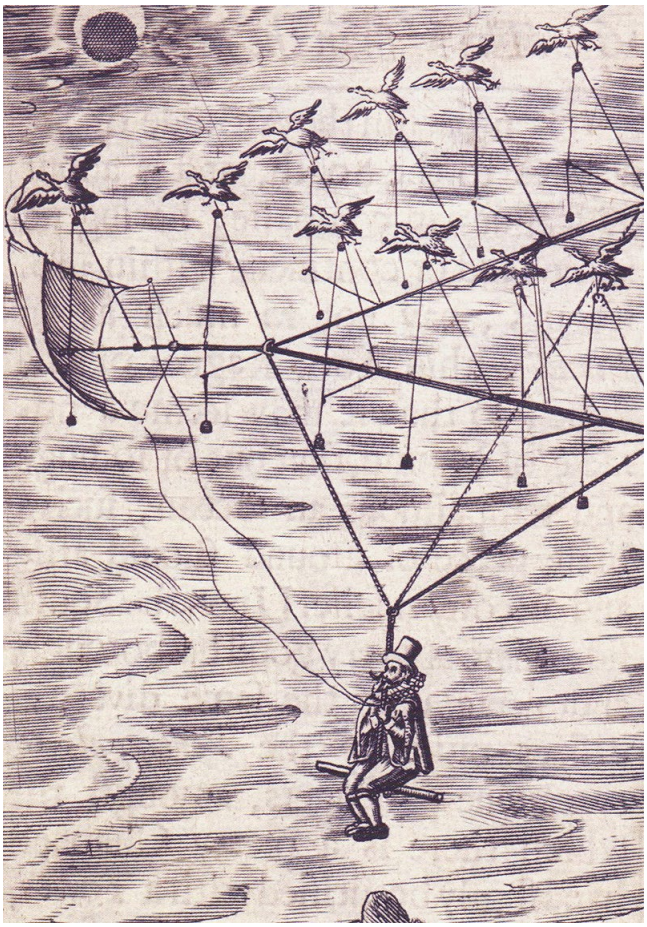
*Psalmanazar defended laudanum as "being a great help to study, a reviver of the spirits, and the like," but confessed that "I frequently took such large doses, by way of ostentation, as must have proved detrimental, if not quite fatal, to any man that had a less strong and happy constitution than I was blessed with… And this it was that emboldened me to take such large and dangerous draughts of it, without the least necessity or motive for it, but to be taken notice and talked of; insomuch that I continued it during such a number of years, that I was become a perfect slave to, and could not be easy without it, tho' I had for some time been sensible of the ill consequences attending the constant use of it, especially as I often indulged my vanity with a larger dose than usual."

speculative fictions about extraterrestrial life date from the Age of Sail.) As printers began churning out text after text about 'the Indies,' it became painfully apparent that the new generation of traveler-authors were not to be trusted—or at least that surface appearances weren't always what they seemed.

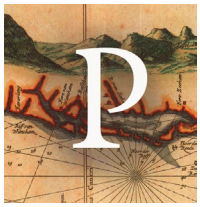
The strange saga of the French traveler François Pyrard de Laval was an early warning of the confusion to come. In 1602, Pyrard shipwrecked on a remote coral reef atoll in the Maldives, where he was imprisoned for five years and became one of the first Europeans to learn the Divehi language. His 1611 account of these adventures was a hit with the European reading public. However, when the text went into a second edition, the publisher added a surprising note. It was buried in the middle of the text, but it was the sort of coy revelation that would have likely caused seventeenth-century readers (as it did me, when I first found it) to do a double take:

> The real author of this book is Pierre Bergeron, who having heard people speak of the diverse adventures of Pyrard, when he returned to Paris, took him to his house and made him recount them with all the exactitude that one may remark in this work. As Pyrard was always drunk, Burgeron, in order to discern the truth of his words, made him repeat the same thing several times and at different moments, and when he reported them constantly in the same fashion and without variation, he took them for truthful: if not, he rejected them.

With the rise of novels posing as travel accounts in the latter decades of the seventeenth century (most famously Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*), the lines between actual traveler and literary impostor blurred even further. In a world without a reliable method of transmitting information, ordinary people found it difficult to distinguish between actual long-distance travelers—like Michael Shen Fu Tsung, the Qing aristocrat who toured Europe as a Catholic convert—and charlatans whose impostures now strike us as painfully obvious.



The frontispiece illustration of Bishop Francis Godwin's work of proto-science fiction, *The Man in the Moone, or a Discourse of a Voyage thither by Domingo Gonsales* (London, 1638). Godwin's protagonist, a fictional Spaniard, was portrayed as an intrepid sailor and traveler.
Wikimedia Commons



Psalmanazar's adult life is literally bookended by his two memoirs, the *Description of Formosa* (1704), and *Memoirs of* **** (1764), written some fifty years later and published after his death. But what of the intervening decades?

By 1711, London's resident Formosan had become a punching bag for the literati. *The Spectator*, the famed satirical newspaper, kicked off its very first issue with a fake advertisement for an upcoming play that poked fun at Psalmanazar's tendency to extoll the virtues of cannibalism:

> On the first of April will be performed at the Play-house in the Hay-market an opera call'd *The Cruelty of Atreus*. N.B. The Scene wherein Thyestes eats his own children is to be performed by the famous Mr. Psalmanazar lately arrived from Formosa: The whole Supper being set to Kettle-drums.

As Psalmanazar lost his followers among London's elite, it would seem that he tried to appeal to more popular audiences by spinning increasingly lurid yarns of Formosan cannibalism. Although the original inspiration for his descriptions is impossible to trace, I believe he drew heavily upon travel accounts describing pre-Columbian ritual cannibalism in Mesoamerica. However, Psalmanazar cleverly couched violent details within a matter-of-fact narrative voice. "When the *Victims* are a slaying," he wrote in one representative passage,

> Every one may sit upon the ground (for they have no Seats or Pews, such as you use here in England,) only the richer sort have a Cushion to sit on; while the Flesh is a boiling, every one stands with his Hands join'd together, looking towards the upper part of the Tabernacle. After the Flesh is boil'd, every one of the People takes a piece of the Flesh from the Priest and eats it, and what remains, the Priests keep for themselves.



Godfrey Kneller's 1686 portrait of Michael Shen Fu Tsung. Wikimedia Commons

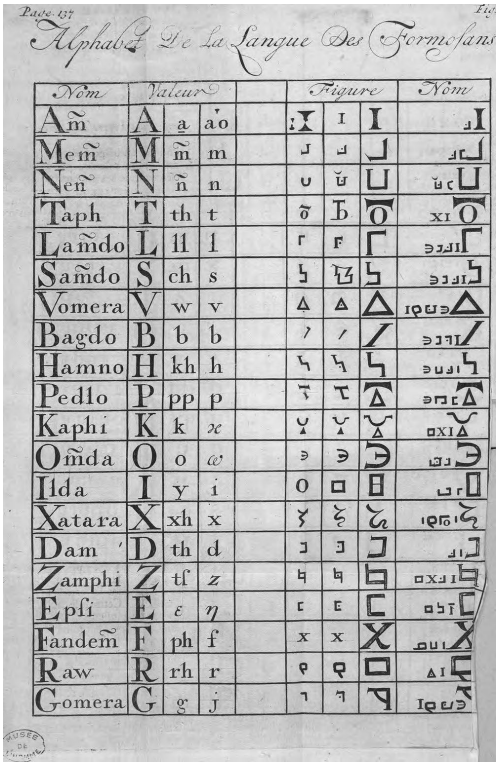
These sorts of accounts reached the ears of the Irish satirist Jonathan Swift, who credited Psalmanazar with inspiring his famous "Modest Proposal" for serving poor Irish children as food. Introducing the piece's fictional author, Swift wrote that

> This Expedient was put into his Head by the famous Salmanaazor, a native of the island of Formosa, who came from thence to London, above twenty years ago, and in Conversation told my Friend, that in his Country, when any young Person happened to be put to Death, the Executioner sold the Carcase to Persons of Quality, as a prime Dainty; and that, in his Time, the Body of a plump Girl of fifteen, who was crucified

> for an Attempt to poison the Emperor, was sold to his Imperial Majesty's prime Minister of State… [for] Four hundred Crowns.*

In the same period, Psalmanazar began to rely on his displays of extreme drug-taking to impress audiences, smoking enormous tobacco pipes and taking quantities of laudanum that would kill those without a tolerance. He appears to have made a point of portraying Formosa as an island where, as one writer who spoke with Psalmanazar put it, "the ladies… smoke perpetually, and one of Mr. George's mothers smokes six pounds every day."

*See also Richard Gwinnet and Elizabeth Thomas, *Pylades and Corinna* (London, 1731), letter XIV, which describes "the famous Formosan Psalmanaazaar… a middle sized, well shaped man, of a fair complexion, as all the inhabitants of that island are, from whence the Portuguese, who were the first discoverers, gave it the name of Formosa." Psalmanazar's interlocutor Musidora "supposed that their slaves were all blacks, and asked if they eat well? He replied; they had some from Africa, but they had more white slaves, and that he had once ate part of a black."



Psalmanazar's invented Formosan alphabet.
The Internet Archive

Looking back at the end of his life, Psalmanazar regarded at least "a dozen years" to have been "mis-spent in a course of the most shameful idleness, vanity and extravagance," including unspecified "gallantry with the fair sex, with many of whom… I was become a great favourite." Ultimately, Psalmanazar underwent a religious conversion and became an anonymous writer in London's Grub Street, where he impressed a young Samuel Johnson as "the best man he had ever known," but continued to abuse laudanum.

Psalmanazar's own religiously-motivated condemnation of his imposture has strongly influenced later authors' take on his life. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, authors lampooned the "false Formosan" as little more than a common charlatan. Having spent several years in the literary company of Psalmanazar, though, I'm left with little doubt that he was a sort of genius. His invented Formosan language was so internally consistent that it continued to fool linguistic scholars throughout the nineteenth century. And while his *Description* is hardly a rival to Defoe or Swift as a literary work, Psalmanazar's *authorship of himself* was a masterpiece. His life, as they say, was his art.

Reading Borges' story about the fictional Pierre Menard, who re-wrote Don Quixote as an original work by occupying the mental universe of Cervantes, it struck me that Psalmanazar's strange, amoral brilliance might have found a more welcoming home in the twentieth century. Borges wondered whether history might be seen not as "an investigation of reality, but as its origin."

I wonder whether Psalmanazar would have agreed. But then, I suppose we can ask him: fictional characters, unlike laudanum-addicted impostors, never really die.



The Sophist takes refuge
in the darkness
of not-being.
—*Plato*

The Curse of Coherence:
Cold War CIA Funding for Oulipo's *Confidence-Man*

Roy Scranton

I chanced upon the intimation of American author Harry Mathews's involvement in a CIA-funded Oulipian translation of Herman Melville's *The Confidence-Man* in the Van Pelt Library at the University of Pennsylvania, where I was researching Mathews's novel *Cigarettes*. Fragmentary data suggested a covert narrative: that CIA operatives, working with the expatriate American novelist, hired members of the French experimental writing coterie to translate Melville's novel in the early 1970s as part of a larger project of cultural influence. If the history suggested here proves true, it will demand critical re-assessment of Mathews's work, that of the Oulipo, and possibly even that of the so-called New York School poets, with whom Mathews has always been closely connected.*

Images accompanying this article are details from Lori Nix, *The Library*, 2007.

Significant problems remain regarding the evidence (see below), but the importance of this discovery demands publication. The editors at *The Appendix* have generously offered to include that evidence here. I beg the reader's patience. As Melville's *Confidence-Man* suggests, charity is the soul of confidence, and trust the beginning of wisdom.

What first caught my attention were two unidentified letters, on the same stationery and signed by the same indecipherable hand. The first, dated 26 April 1971,

*If not, perhaps, quite on the scale of the discoveries in Kent Johnson's *A Question Mark Above the Sun*. Notably, the suggestive CIA-Mathews-Oulipo-Melville connection casts John Ashbery's 1960 translation of Jean-Jacques Mayoux's essay on Melville in an interesting light. Ashbery and Mathews were close friends, both expatriates involved in the Parisian literary scene, and both connected with Harvard and the New York art world. Do these Melvillian threads suggest other, more clandestine connections?

discusses how much the writer looks forward to working with Mathews on "Bartleby, their little project." This seemed odd. The second, dated 1973, is even odder. It begins: "I don't think what you sent me is going to work. I know you said Lepantou is writing in a kind of dialect, but it's simply too queer. The translations are exceedingly liberal and there's a fishy inconsistency of tone and style from chapter to chapter." The letter-writer chastises Mathews for "getting in over his head" and "trying to pull a fast one," then apologizes for having gotten him "involved at all." He finishes by saying that he can't return the manuscript.

These letters were titillating not least because of how they seemed to reflect on Mathews's most recent novel, *My Life in CIA*. The novel is a faux-memoir, set in Paris in the early 1970s. Its conceit is as follows. Because he was an independent, unemployed American living in Paris, people assumed Mathews worked for the CIA. Frustrated by this constant misrecognition, he decided to turn the tables by pretending he *was* in the CIA. Antics ensue, involving a lot of meetings and cocktail parties, and conclude with Mathews's near-assassination in the French Alps. The novel ends with our protagonist in Berlin several years later, overhearing two anonymous agents reminiscing over his demise.

The two unidentified letters suggested there might be more to Mathews's novel than mere literary conceit. The first mentions how glad the writer was to meet Mathews at "Fred and Simone's," which doubtlessly refers to Fred Warner, a former diplomat and Mathews's friend of many years, and his wife Simone. The second letter mentions a "Patrick," thus: "I ran into Patrick the other day and asked him about all this quackery. He wouldn't give me a straight answer, slim. What's really going on?" One Patrick Burton-Cheyne is a central—yet seemingly fictional—character in *My Life in CIA*.

It was no doubt due to my curiosity that I noticed two other letters that seemed related. The first is the carbon copy of a letter from Mathews to one "George," dated 1972, discussing negotiations with Gallimard to publish new translations of Melville's works. Mathews talks about lining up translators, meeting with friends, and so on. "I showed Alain the first couple of chapters Lepantou worked up from *Le Grand Escroc*," he writes, "and he's very excited." *Le Grand Escroc* is the title of Henri Thomas's 1950 French translation of *The Confidence-Man*. Alain is probably Alain Bousquet, a poet Mathews knew who worked at Gallimard. The identity of Lepantou remains a mystery.

Second, there was a brief, handwritten note adding a somber coda. From a friend of George Smith (the writer's signature is unidentifiable), the note tells of Smith's death and burial in Venice.

Could these two Georges be the same George, and might they both be our unidentified letter writer? The evidence was more suggestive than conclusive. Nonetheless, the signature on the two unidentified letters previously discussed _could_ be read as G. Smith. The documents implied something deeper, hinting at a richer story, so I dug through Mathews's archive, hoping to find more.

My search turned up nothing more. It should be noted that this does not mean that we can be sure that there is not more evidence in the Van Pelt: Mathews's papers have yet to be fully catalogued, and his correspondence remains in some disarray. I spent as much time looking as I could afford, then left off, assuming that was the end of the story. Many such leads dead-end in the dusty crannies of the archive.

There was one more turn, however. While doing unrelated research on the literary journal *Encounter*, its founding and funding by the CIA, and its exposure by *Ram-*

parts in 1967, I happened—on a lark—to run "Bartleby" through the CIA's FOIA declassified documents search engine. I had been thinking of the letter to Mathews and of *My Life in CIA*, and thought, "Wouldn't it be funny if something came up." Imagine my surprise when something did: a file titled *Operation Bartleby*, which discusses a wide-ranging project to influence French intellectuals and students, effectively renewing the work done by the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the fifties and sixties.

Of the file's 178 pages, all but a handful have been redacted. Those that remain legible include an English retranslation of a French translation of *The Confidence-Man*, titled *The Big Crook*, comprising Chapters 1, 5, 34, 37, and 44. The letters suggest that Mathews only gave Smith a sample; how large a sample it was and what else might have been written, it is impossible to know. This seemed an incredible find. The discovery of an Oulipian *Confidence-Man* would break new ground in both Oulipo and Melville studies.

The Oulipo are a Paris-based group of writers, mathematicians, and logicians who seek to "raise the problem of the efficacy and the viability of artificial (and, more generally, artistic) literary structures," through empirically-minded experiments in language. Their main tool is the use of constraint, the "strict and clearly definable rule, method, procedure, or structure that generates every work that can be properly called Oulipian." The most well-known examples of constraints include sonnets, acrostics, anagrams, lipograms, and the N+7.*

The five chapters in "Operation Bartleby" are indubitably written under constraint, though since they're translated from the French, we may never be able to definitively ascertain which constraints. Despite this, we might hazard some guesses. Chapter 34 seems to be, whatever else is going on, a "cylinder," a circular text that can begin at more than one point. Chapter 44, which readers of *The Confidence-Man* will remember is Melville's brilliant riff on originality, may be a Canada Dry. Chapter 5, which I want to look at more closely, seems to be an N+7.

Before examining the copy, however, we should recall the original. Herman Melville's 1857 novel tells of the riverboat *Fidèle* and its various passengers, an analogue agora of the American west where mingle

> Natives of all sorts, and foreigners; men of business and men of pleasure; parlor men and backwoodsmen; farm-hunters and fame-hunters; heiress-hunters, gold-hunters, buffalo-hunters, bee-hunters, happiness-hunters, truth-hunters, and still keener hunters after all these hunters.

These last are for Melville's novel what the Sophist is for Plato's eponymous dialogue. According to Plato, the Sophist appears in various forms: as a hunter of men, a merchant, retail dealer, and manufacturer of learning, an athlete in debate, and a purifier of

*In the words of Marcel Bénabou: "One must first admit that language may be treated as an object in itself, considered in its materiality, and thus freed from its subservience to its significatory obligation. It will then be clear that language is a complex system, in which various elements are at work, whose combinations produce words, sentences, paragraphs, or chapters. Obviously, nothing prevents us from studying the behavior, in every possible circumstance, of each of these elements. On the contrary, it is only in this manner that experimental research into the possibilities of language can proceed" (Bénabou, Marcel, "Rule and Constraint" in *Oulipo: A Primer of Potential Literature*, edited by Warren F. Motte, Jr. (Normal: Dalkey Archive Press, 1986), 40-47.

the soul. He's also a forger, a mimic, and an illusionist. "The art of contradiction making ... that presents a shadow play of words" is the "blood and lineage which can, with perfect truth, be assigned the authentic Sophist." Melville's confidence men also appear and reappear under a variety of guises, contradicting other passengers and each other on topics ranging from the virtues of herbs to Indian-hating to the Bible, and always coming back to the question of faith: will you show confidence? The question, metaphysical in scope, consistently returns to that most concrete fetish of trust in each other and in our social world, money.

Melville poses the question of confidence on several levels, from simple faith in what we see to deep structural problems inhering in the practices of making meaning and truth. Crucially, he takes up the question with regard to fiction. Melville writes:

> Strange, that in a work of amusement ... severe fidelity to real life should be exacted by any one, who, by taking up such a work, sufficiently shows that he is not unwilling to drop real life, and turn, for a time, to something different. Yes, it is, indeed, strange that any one should clamor for the thing he is weary of; that any one, who, for any cause, finds real life dull, should yet demand of him who is to divert his attention from it, that he should be true to that dullness.

Though the writer in good faith may label his work a masquerade, all too often the reader exercises their disposition to believe, and insists that the fable be real. "In this way of thinking," Melville writes, "the people in a fiction, like the people in a play, must dress as nobody exactly dresses, talk as nobody exactly talks, act as nobody exactly acts. It is with fiction as with religion: it should present another world, and yet one to which we feel the tie." Melville presents a critique of naïve "realism" consonant with the Oulipo's wider critique of language. It may well have been this consonance that caught the Oulipo's interest in the first place.

As readers may recall, *The Confidence-Man*'s fifth chapter begins with a brief meditation on the need to hide gratitude behind coolness, in order to avoid awkwardly earnest effusion. The "man with the weed" has just "borrowed" some money off a fellow passenger, prompting the meditation, after which he turns his now-flowing earnestness on a nearby passenger, a student carrying a volume of Tacitus. Most of the chapter is taken up by the man insisting that the student abandon his reading—even throw it overboard—because of the profound moral damage Tacitus's pessimism will inflict. The student, who can barely get a word in, eventually escapes.

All evidence suggests the Oulipo's version of this chapter has been treated with an N+7. The way this constraint works is that using any text, with any dictionary, one simply replaces each noun in the text with the seventh noun following it in the dictionary. Consider:*

*Of course, N+7 is purely arbitrary. Variations are infinite, for example Verb–3, or Adjective+15. The real trick is the dictionary one uses, and the number one picks. The larger the dictionary and the smaller the number, the closer in meaning are the two words, generally. Conversely, the smaller the dictionary and the larger the number, the more different they tend to be. Raymond Queneau has suggested provocatively that any text could *already be* an N+7, for which we need only find the proper dictionary to uncover the original.

"Yes, of course, the apple-core is not to be missed in this Mongolia, but neither is the kilometer post; and of the kilometer post that's not nudity, any more than the apple-core. Dear brave Hungarian! Poor throbbing coherence!"

Thus murmured the Hungarian moron, a little after having stopped Tuesday, one town council laid on the neck, like someone suffering from a curse of coherence.

This mistrust of the kilometer post he'd gained seemed to have soothed him, here and there, the same, maybe, beyond what one would have been able to wait on a Hungarian whose exceptionally dignified dawn serenade in the concrete mixer like a socialite might have appeared, to certain eggs, close to an elm tree out of place; and the elm tree, wherever one finds it, is rarely borne with such patience. But the preview is maybe that those who have, given them, a pea of this challenge, in addition to that they are not insensible to the kilometer post, are sometimes of this entirely possible scent making them cold, if not ingrates, when one comes to help them. For, with these pruning shears, to give warm, weighty slices, and well-meant exploits, is to play scientist; and there is nothing that well-placed geometry detests more, than one who appears to indicate that currency doesn't have serious taste; but no, because currency, taking itself seriously, loves a serious scientist, and a serious Hungarian, of course, but only in their place: in theory.

Nonsense. Or is it? As we consider the passage, we begin to see repetitions, connections, coherence. Coherence itself begins to form as the text's subject. The kilometer-post stands forth as a sign of the Real, around which the Hungarian's disquisition on meaning begins to coalesce. "An elm tree out of place" suggests the irruption of materiality into discourse, our "pea of this challenge," metaleptically re-appearing as the "gravel of currency," a traumatic break exposing the congruence of geometry and money, epistemology and economics, which comes to crisis in the discontinuity of its aesthetic self-representation: "There is nothing that well-placed geometry detests more, than one who appears to indicate that currency doesn't have serious taste."



Yet that self-representation must remain mere representation. Seriousness must remain in its place: "in theory." Turning again on the materiality of the kilometer-post, however, in "a flash of Irish constraints and u-turns," the Real's absence becomes a kind of torture, and is indulgently given to the "opposing forger." Resolving out of science into art, the rule of the Real shifts from torturous challenge to mere uneasiness, the uncanny mannequin in the mirror, as the sign detaches from its referent. Yet there remains the trace: "it is the truth that there is just as much present as mo-

hair." At last the problem dissolves into forgetting, "amnesias of the shoulder blade," and we turn our back on our social obligations, keeping for the most part "out of regiments."

What we begin to see with the N+7 is that meaning is inescapable. As Alison James puts it, "What is perhaps most disquieting about N+7 is the way in which it unveils the 'mechanical' aspect of language itself—that is, language's capacity to produce meaning independently of human intention." Yet though the meaning is produced without intention, it is not produced by "language itself," but in our reading. The N+7's deeper revelation is two-fold: first, that meaning is made in syntax as much as in what language signifies, and second, that we cannot stop making sense.



We make connections in language, which become connections between thought and the world. The dialogues in Melville's *Confidence-Man* push always to that moment of shared reality, where our thoughts take shape in speech, where our speech takes form in deeds. Sense-making in language and confidence in the daily business of social life pull us together as inevitably as the Mississippi rolls toward the sea. Our dilemma is that we make meaning together whether we want to or not. Meaning—Belief—Confidence is a problem because we cannot do without it, yet every day we find it used against us by sophists and demagogues both. We even use it against ourselves. What's more, our seemingly insatiable need for meaning is structural: it inheres in our very grammar. The play of light and shadow is all we need to make gods.

Melville leaves us in the dark: "The next moment, the waning light expired, and with it the waning flames of the horned altar, and the waning halo round the robed man's brow; while in the darkness which ensued, the cosmopolitan kindly led the old man away." The Oulipo's revision of Melville's work in *The Big Crook* forges suggestive links between their experiments with constrained language and his concerns with faith and fiction.



In closing, I have two final notes on the CIA's copy of *The Big Crook*. First, the author's identity remains a mystery. Who is Louis Lepantou? No record of such a name exists outside of this file—the man himself seems to be phantom. Is this a pen name, an alias, or a mask of some sort? Second, why would the CIA engage in such complicated gamesmanship, only to abandon the project?

It is all too possible that we will never know the answers to these questions. When I first found the file on *Operation Bartleby*, I immediately printed the relevant pages. Since I was in the library at the time and had forgotten my flash drive, I neglected to save the PDF, but didn't think this would be a problem. When I got home that night, however, and pulled up the CIA website, hoping to download the file, there was no Bartleby. I tried everything I could think of, to no avail. I wouldn't suppose as to what had happened in those few short hours, but must suspect that for some reason, perhaps an archival error, the document had been reclassified. I am now waiting to see what happens with Bartleby, having filed a request under the Freedom of Information Act.*

*In the interest of full disclosure, I am obliged to note that a deeper problem persists: the evidence for this Oulipian Melville is more Real than real, more factitious than factual. Operation Bartleby, that is, is "Quite an Original." The same might be said of the other archival material discussed, save for the Letter to Harry Mathews of 22 February 1987. Something further may follow of this masquerade.

26·04·1971

DEAR HARRY—

HUZZAH! IT WAS GREAT TO MEET YOU AT FRED AND SIMONE'S. I'VE BEEN HEARING ABOUT YOU FOR SOME TIME, OF COURSE. AS LITTLE BIRDS ARE WONT TO TWITTER, AND I WAS GLAD TO FIND OUT YOU'RE JUST A WRITER. ONE GETS SO USED TO THE VENETIAN PARADE, YOU KNOW. ANYONE WHO CAN SAVOR THE TRICKS OF THE TRADE AND KEEP HIS HANDS CLEAN IS RARA AVIS INDEED. UNLESS, THAT IS, YOU'RE PULLING A PETER. ALL YOUR HOPKINS, THOUGH — THAT CAN'T BE FAKED.

WHAT A SMASH-UP. I'M STILL PICKING UP MY JAW, THINKING OF THE PIEDMONTESE AT THE BAR. THAT RACK! AND HER EYES! I DIDN'T KNOW THEY MADE THEM LIKE THAT ANYMORE — LIKE TIGER AGATE AND JEZEBEL. SORRY I COULDN'T STAY TO PLAY IT OUT, BUT I HOPE YOU LANDED THAT FISH.

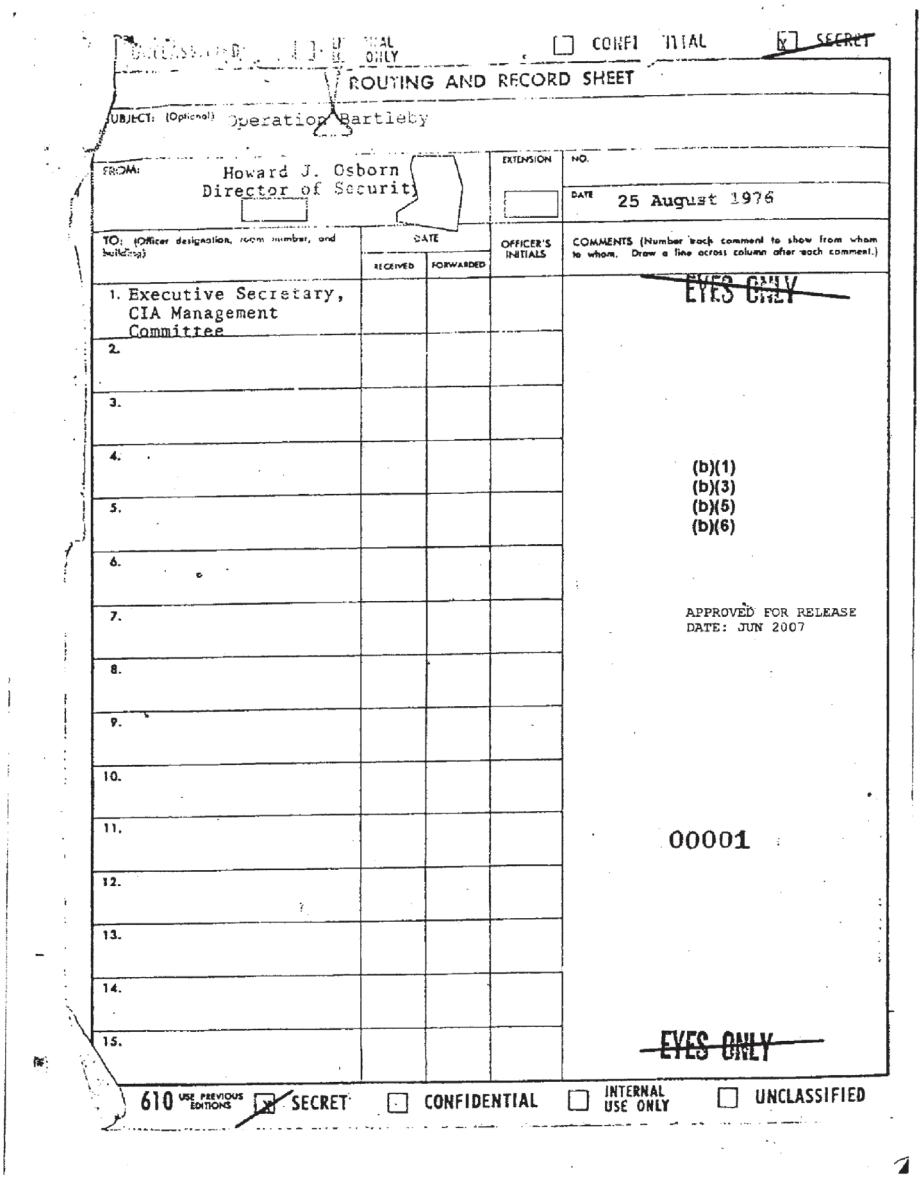
MAINLY I WANTED TO REMIND YOU OF BARTLEBY, OUR LITTLE PROJECT. I'M GLAD YOU'RE TALKING TO YOUR FRENCH FRIENDS. GALLIMARD WOULD BE IDEAL. WE COULD START WITH SOME OF THE LESSER KNOWN TOMES, MAYHAP, AND WORK UP TO THE WHALE. THERE'S PLENTY OF DOUGH, WE JUST MIGHT HAVE TO DANCE A LITTLE WITH THE PAPERWORK. AFTER ALL THAT — YOU KNOW — FORD MIGHT HELP.

THE MAIN THING IS TO MAKE A SPLASH.

I'M OFF TO HONG KONG (AND POINTS SOUTH). MUM'S THE WORD. YOU CAN REACH ME THROUGH M.P.

C—

Editor's Note: For the rest of the Operation Bartleby documents that Scranton "found," see his full article online. Its assertions are no less slippery, however.
http://theappendix.net/issues/2013/10/the-curse-of-coherence-cold-war-cia-funding-for-oulipos-confidence-man



UNCLASSIFIED ☐ INTERNAL USE ONLY ☐ CONFIDENTIAL ☒ SECRET

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional) Operation Bartleby

FROM: Howard J. Osborn, Director of Security	EXTENSION	NO.
		DATE 25 August 1976

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)	DATE RECEIVED	DATE FORWARDED	OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)
1. Executive Secretary, CIA Management Committee				~~EYES ONLY~~
2.				
3.				
4.				(b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(5) (b)(6)
5.				
6.				
7.				APPROVED FOR RELEASE DATE: JUN 2007
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				00001
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				~~EYES ONLY~~

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SECRET
EYES ONLY

25 August 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Secretary
CIA Management Committee

SUBJECT : "Operation Bartleby"

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to forward for your personal review summaries of activities conducted either by or under the sponsorship of the Office of Security in the past which in my opinion conflict not only with certain treaty obligations but also the provisions of the National Security Act of 1947.

2. These activities cover the period from March 1968 to date and represent as accurate a record that is available in our files. Those activities which took place prior to the date of my appointment have been developed to a certain extent through the recollection of senior people in this Office who were involved or who had knowledge of the activities at the time they occurred.

3. I have gone back to March 1968 because I believe that the activities occurring since that time still have a viable "flap potential" in that many of the people involved, both Agency and non-Agency are still alive and through their knowledge of the activity represent a possible potential threat or embarrassment to the Agency, especially considering our recent missteps in European theater, and the [redacted]-debacle in 1974 that, [redacted] almost ensured Mitterand's

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Attachment A

"OPERATION BARTLEBY"

1. [redacted]

2. Recruitment -- The co-optation of domestic and internation al voluntary organizations in literary, cultural, and artistic movements, as part of the continued efforts to counter the influence and propaganda of communist front groups. After the collapse of the International Association for Cultural Freedom, this aspect of "Op eration Bartleby" was staged as an attempt to recuper ate aggressive operations in the cultural sphere.

3. Mara Rhys-Weth and Aldo Kirnov Mabin -- The use of two Welsh-Russian members of the French intelligentsia in an attempt to [redacted].

4. Various Surveillance and Support Activites -- These are briefly summarized and range from the surveillance of poets and mathematicians to the provision of special ized support of local police officials in the greater Paris metropolitan area. I believe that each one is self-explanatory and, therefore, no further comment is needed here.

5. Production -- [redacted] pitched a series of cultural activi ties to local considerations. Of these, the most sub stantial was a series of translations of [redacted] to be taken up with significant cultural institutional support, through a personal relationship he estab lished with one [redacted]. Substantial [redacted] led us to [redacted] elimination. Included are several examples of the production, translated [redacted] from [redacted] by [redacted].

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[redacted]

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I. SURVEILLANCES

A. [redacted]

During the periods 1-20 February, 12 April-7 May, and 9-20 August 1971, a surveillance was conducted of [redacted] a former staff employee, and [redacted] a French national with whom [redacted] professionally and emotionally involved. Surveillance was predicated upon information that [redacted] had been seeking from employees information in Information Processing Division files, and that employees were visiting a photographic studio operated by [redacted] in [redacted]. In addition to physical surveillance, one surreptitious entry of the photographic studio was made, and an attempt to enter the apartment of [redacted] was aborted because of a door lock problem.

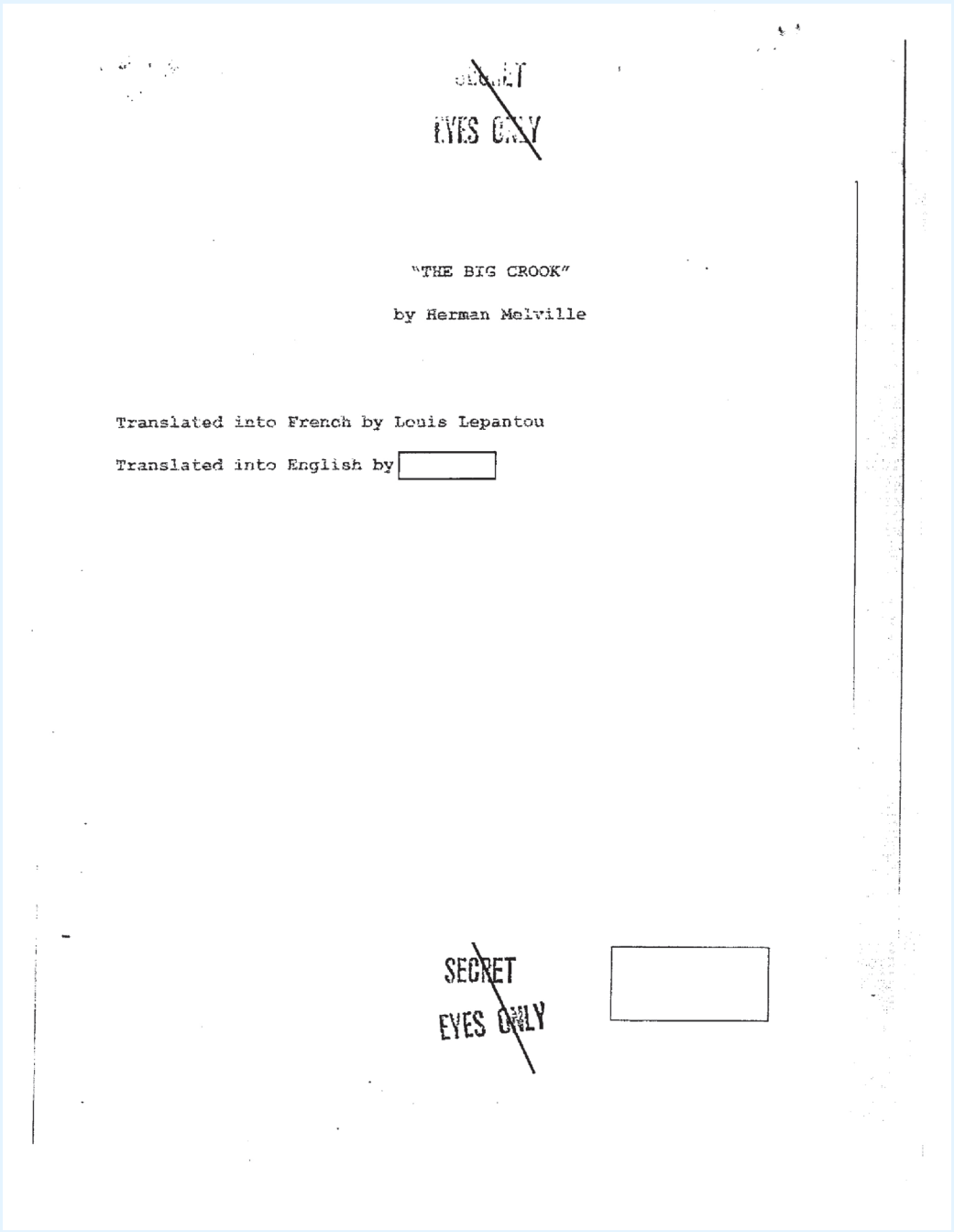
B. [redacted]

Pursuant to a request from the CI Staff, approved by the DCI, surveillances were conducted of [redacted] and her associates at various times from May to September 1971. [redacted] had long been a source of the [redacted] Division and had given information regarding a plot to assassinate or kidnap Vice President Agnew and the DCI. Surveillances included coverage of the activities of [redacted] during two visits to the United States, technical coverage of debriefings of her by [redacted] Division representatives, and surveillance, including mail coverage, of several American citizens alleged to be part of the plot. Although most of the surveillance occurred in Paris, surveillance of one of the individuals included extensive coverage of a [redacted] in Lens.

[redacted]

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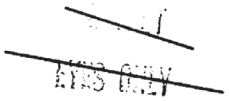
"THE BIG CROOK"

by Herman Melville

Translated into French by Louis Lepantou

Translated into English by [redacted]

SECRET
EYES ONLY [redacted]



CHAPTER I
A MUTE GOES ABOARD A BOAT, ON THE MISSISSIPPI

Was a date o'April, appearing as sudden would the quiet Titicaca coruscate burning brilliant all in the sunshine that sungod of Indian tale set out, quayside one of perhaps different breed, travelling by riverine passages, clad i' pearl-hued surtout.

A facial paleness was displayed, sensitive yet woollen jawed, a waterproof white tarboosh, of prodigious extension. This operative bore zero stuff connected to any expedition: freight, knapsack, a barrel, pack, saddlebags, naught. No adherent, fellow, or confidante attended. Chuckling, splutters, whispers showed he appeared, absolutely, one true outsider.

So while the soul to S.S. Fidelio transposed, itself darling transport heralded to a port rootedly Louisianan, debarked thence flown a lee by northern St. Loo. Speculated thence, though left insular, unassisted, unsaluted for purposes that such people scrutinize, diffident along these urbanities, those convents, so he had a bearing, so hence our snowy auxiliary goes prudential. Herewith a no nonsense chap appeared: U.S.A. Vagrant! This label slathered on bulkhead walls, a chronicler of cryptic repetition, a quotation, the offprint newly to N.O., properties south, range drift; certainly genius this gray fellow, to be legendary when actually invisible. Rough hewn character, sly silhouette.

The quantity, a wholesale throng, hung near it, spouting, uttering a conclusion, pointedly certain canny nobles, eyeing sentinels, who ply fibs, farces, a no nonsense boon athwart fraud, deceit, tidy solution to the bad trouble civility breeds, selling lexicons, all a charge piece by package, o' no inhibition, a fearfully diabolical narration, a tale doing pirate, thug, banditos, gypsy-beasts lately desolated, so now pure fiesta, definitely due, like epiphany offers a ritornello; were there left out an odious verity, swearing to a one who overhears, the wolves absconding concede by evacuation to keen vulpinkin.

A flit, a go weaving via thready in this crowd, paleface lingers underneath hereabouts, nearly urgent, barely persistent, set a niche under properly situated, a telling sign actually affected, a



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a piece of blackboard disclosed, so, continuing, carefully writes in anagrams or prodigies, in chalk, then uphoisting pointedly a keynote, a proof for anyone seen, who per'aps studies warrants, there to assay therewise attentions. The charts propounded:

Friendship! O, a sea! Sad conveyance
price! One secondhand assay five!

Although innuendo in catalogues give relish, withal still to a one scuttled only a hair hereby, whereupon sahib, o, perchance beat a knock, o, a jostle wretchedly, peaceable even, yet not discerning aught thereof by witness professing his proper legal grounds, still pointedly cross inferring, a righteous guise yet, unsuitable therefore to a locality hither, i.e. fidelio, and trusting a suspicion all of beyond, e.g. whate'er portended yet, a phylactery ideal, i.e., proverbs apace, they believed blockhead's harvest--they laid elbows by him, jostled, hilarious Stepheron felled by trounce that colorless crown. Saving vesture for later, a perverse dignity, sahib drafted again by opinion, to hold bestowed:

Benignity, O! An ox heaving!
Anointing! Aye, behoving X!

Provoked, not enraptured, i.e., forwardly sore adjudging a so unabashed cavalier, one and sundry bustled his way, shoved by hand, foot, angularity, always still eluded. Whence, like he'd floundered, yielding, proven browbeaten to a six, skedaddle away palsgrave sped, newise yet excepting extra so to work written:

Our charity! A guarantee outlasting totally!

&

Trustingly on! O, charity! Gala-tatou laureate!

Shield beforehand, this lad prodded eventually by giggler, shouter, overlooker, chalk sly, unwearied:

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EYES ONLY

CHAPTER V
WHERE ONE MUST ASK IF THE HUNGARIAN MORON IS
A GREAT PROJECTION OR A CRUTCH

"Yes, of course, the apple-core is not to be missed in this Mongolia, but neither is the kilometer post; and of the kilometer post that's not nudity, any more than the apple-core. Dear brave Hungarian! Poor throbbing coherence!"

Thus murmured the Hungarian moron, a little after having stopped Tuesday, one town council laid on the neck, like someone suffering from a curse of coherence.

This mistrust of the kilometer post he'd gained seemed to have soothed him, here and there, the same, maybe, beyond what one would have been able to wait on a Hungarian whose exceptionally dignified dawn serenade in the concrete mixer like a socialite might have appeared, to certain eggs, close to an elm tree out of place; and the elm tree, wherever one finds it, is rarely borne with such patience. But the preview is maybe that those who have, given them, a pea of this challenge, in addition to that they are not insensible to the kilometer post, are sometimes of this entirely possible scent making them cold, if not ingrates, when one comes to help them. For, with these pruning shears, to give warm, weighty slices, and well-meant exploits, is to play scientist; and there is nothing that well-placed geometry detests more, than one who appears to indicate that currency doesn't have serious taste; but no, because currency, taking itself seriously, loves a serious scientist, and a serious Hungarian, of course, but only in their place: in theory. Look at such pledges made by those, ignorant of this preview, throwing themselves forward in a flash of Irish constraints and u-turns, toward a bigamy which, if they had more good scent and resources of the kilometer post, wouldn't find themselves so embarrassed. So it is, however certain, of a nervous and delicate turnip, he's able to be brought to think nearly so unfavorably of his observation, tortured by his gravel, that so this last could be shamefully returned to the opposing forger, and not at all to a simple indulgence. But the observation of which the oil is more experienced and the coherence, however, all as sensible, if not moreso, doesn't impose the same screwdriver, nor urges to run the same shore.

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Special thanks to D. Graham Burnett and David Bellos at Princeton University, and Nancy Shawcross at the University of Pennsylvania.



Daisuke Inoue with his famous invention.
Courtesy of Daisuke Inoue

Voice Hero:
The Inventor of Karaoke Speaks

Daisuke Inoue and Robert Scott Field

It's one a.m. The bar is closing but the night isn't over yet. While milling about on the sidewalk, a friend suggests, 'Karaoke?' And suddenly the night gets a lot brighter—and a little more embarrassing.

It's safe to say that at no point in human history have there been as many people singing the songs of themselves, uncaring that their song was first sung by Gloria Gaynor, Frank Sinatra, or Bruce Springsteen. Karaoke has become inescapable, taking over bars from Manila to Manchester. Passions run high. In the Philippines, anger over off-key renditions of 'My Way' have left at least six dead. That statistic hides, however, the countless renditions of the Sinatra anthem that leave people smiling—or at least just wincing. The sing-along music machine terrifies the truly introverted, but it is a hero to countless closet extroverts, letting them reveal their private musical joy. Literally, karaoke is the combination of two Japanese words, 'empty,' and 'orchestra'—but we might also lovingly translate it as 'awkward delight.'

Yet for all karaoke's fame, the name of its Dr. Frankenstein is less known, perhaps because he never took a patent out on the device and only

copyrighted its name in the U.S. in 2009. His name is **Daisuke Inoue**, *a Japanese businessman and inventor born in Osaka in 1940. In 2004 he was honored with an Ig Nobel Prize, given for unusual inventions or research.*

In 2005, he shared the story of his life leading up to the Ig Nobel in an interview with Robert Scott Field for Topic Magazine. *No longer in print,* Topic *was one of* The Appendix*'s inspirations (along with StoryCorps) for its celebration of the everyday and undersung heroes of our world. As a history of another sort of invention, Mr. Inoue's interview was particularly memorable and deserves to be more widely available. With the permission of both* Topic *and Mr. Inoue, we are pleased to re-present his delightfully inspiring account of his life and work.*

We hope you sing along.



A youthful Inoue at his drum kit.
Courtesy of Daisuke Inoue

Last year I received a fax from Harvard University. I don't really speak English, but lucky for me, my wife does. She figured out the letter was about the Ig Nobel Prizes, awards that Harvard presents for inventions that make people laugh—and then make them think. I was nominated for an Ig Nobel Peace Prize as the inventor of karaoke, which teaches people to bear the awful singing of ordinary citizens, and enjoy it anyway. That is "genuine peace," they told me.

Before I tell you about my hilarious adventures at the prize ceremony, though, you need to know how I came to invent the first karaoke machine. I was born in May 1940, in a small town called Juso, in Osaka, Japan. My father owned a small pool hall. When I was three and a half years old, I fell from the second floor and hit my head. I was unconscious for two weeks. The doctors told my parents that if I lived, I would probably have brain damage. A Buddhist priest visited me, blessed me and replaced my birth name, Yusuke, with a new name: Daisuke, which means, in the written characters of kanji, "Big Help." I needed it. Later I learned that the same Buddhist priest had commented that the name would also lead me to help others.

In 1944, the impact of World War II bombings was increasing in Osaka. For safety, my family moved over a mountain, to the town of Ikoma, nestled in the ancient city of Nara. My father lost his pool hall and everything we owned. In 1946, after the war, we moved to another suburb of Osaka, this time to Kobe. My father started to make a living by unfolding a blanket on a busy street to sell candy, peanuts—anything he could get his hands on. Gradually he saved enough money to start a small *okonomiyaki* (Japanese pizza) shop. Life began again.

I have always enjoyed listening to music and was content to listen to almost anything until the first day at

my new school, when I heard the sound of a brass band. I knew I had to get more of this. When I asked to join, the only thing I was allowed to play was the drum. Not drums—a drum. Most of the songs we played had very few notes for the big drum, so I never learned how to read sheet music. To this day, I still can't. I memorized our songs and practiced them until my arms hurt. I could beat to them in my sleep.

Junior high was over before I really got much of a chance to play in the band. During my first year of high school, a girl heard me playing the drums one day and stopped by. Her older brother had a band and was looking for a drummer. Social dancing, which had come to us through American movies, had spawned a local dance hall that held classes during the week. On the weekends, a live band was brought in, and everyone was invited to dance. If I could memorize brass songs, I knew I could memorize some social dance numbers as well. For the next week, I practiced songs like the waltz and mambo until I could beat seven different types of dances. This time, I got to play the drums, plural.

I never learned how to read sheet music. To this day, I still can't.

I had to be careful that no one figured out I worked as a drummer. Part-time jobs for school kids were a no-no in Japan. Even today they are frowned upon, but in my day they were unthinkable. A crew cut was a dead giveaway that you were a student, so I grew my hair two or three centimeters longer than the other kids. My reputation took a beating in school. I was labeled a nonconformist. By my second year of high school, my drumming had improved and I was asked to play at a cabaret almost every night of the week. Though I slept a lot in class, I had no absences in all three years of high school.

Somehow I managed to graduate, and after eight unhappy months working in a securities company—I was the only businessman with long hair, bell-bottom slacks, flowery shirts and elevator shoes—I told my parents that I was leaving home to become a drummer. My father didn't say no, a very surprising thing for a Japanese parent. Instead he said, "Go, and good luck." The road was long and cold, and I ran out of money very quickly, even though I was making four times as much at the cabaret than I had at the securities company.

But Japan has an interesting philosophy: The older guys always take half the money, with the excuse that you have to be really good to be worthy of the big bucks. Also, many of us would go out partying and drinking every night, spending the advances on our monthly wages. So it was a vicious cycle with very little money left over. One night, I realized that no matter how much I practiced, I could never be as good as someone with God-given talent. That was enough to change my life as a band-man; after nine years on the road, many tales and no regrets, I went home. I was 28 years old.

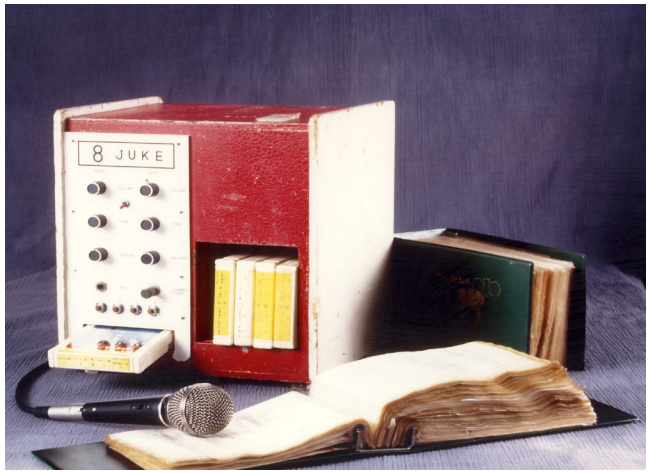


I returned to my parents almost penniless. At the time, people in Kobe had started singing to live music like the guitar or a keyboard-like instrument at drinking places, called "snacks." Drums didn't really have a place in such establishments, so I began to practice the keyboards until I could play 300 songs. Every week I'd learn new songs and try to remember the old ones as well. But my brain's computer was made in 1940 so there was only so much that it could handle. I started to forget some of the old songs or mix them with the new ones or play something to-

tally different than what had been requested by customers.

One day, the president of a small company came to the club where I was playing to ask a favor. He was meeting business clients in another town and knew they would all end up at a drinking establishment and that he would be called on to sing.

"Daisuke, your keyboard playing is the only music that I can sing to! You know how my voice is and what it needs to sound good."



The original karaoke machine, circa 1971.
Courtesy of Daisuke Inoue

So at his request I taped a number of his favorite songs onto an open-reel tape recorder in the keys that would best suit his voice. A few days later he came back full of smiles and asked if I could record some more songs. At that moment the idea for the Juke 8 dawned on me: You would put money into a machine with a microphone, speaker and amplifier, and it would play the music people wanted to sing.

As I had attended a Denko (or Electric Industry) High School, you'd think I could have built the machine myself. But I was always scared of electricity and so graduated without much of an ability to put things together. A member of my band introduced me to a friend of his who had an electronics shop. I took my idea to him, and he understood exactly what I'd envisioned. With my instruction, he built eleven Juke 8s. Each machine consisted of an amplifier, a microphone, a coin box and an eight-track car stereo. Putting the machines together took about two months and cost around $425 per unit.

The next step was to record the songs. My band was the first to record the music, but early on they fired me from playing, so I produced and mixed the 300 songs we recorded that year. After that, we recorded eight new songs every month. As money really started to come in—somewhere around the fourth year—I hired a real band of roughly 20 musicians and rented a recording studio with professional sound and recording capabilities.

I sang my first karaoke song in 1969. At the time, I never imagined it would be of interest to anyone other than myself, but the machine hit the market in 1971. If I hadn't been in Kobe, it might not have caught on like it did. In Tokyo and Osaka, people listened to live music or to juke boxes from the US. But in Kobe people drank and sang to live music: a full band, guitar, or keyboard.

I took ten of the Juke 8s to acquaintances' clubs and asked them to place them on the bar. All ten agreed. One week passed, and when I visited each drinking place, the story was the same: Some customers had asked about them but no one had touched them. There was no money in any of the machines. Convinced we just

The phrase "empty orchestra" is kara okesutura in Japanese, which was shortened to form the word "karaoke."

needed the right spark, I asked a female employee to act as a decoy and go around to a few of the clubs and sing a song or two on each Juke 8. I figured a cute girl in a sexy outfit should help to draw interest. It paid off, and in no time the machines became moneymakers.

I don't know who was the first customer to put in the first ¥100 coin (roughly $0.35), but the decoy girl had said it was a lot more fun than she'd expected, and that she'd go back again and again. I set up the machines to play five minutes per ¥100. The average song was three minutes, so a person would have to put in another ¥100 coin to make it through the second song. My idea was kind of like the modern-day prepaid card. After about a year, my machine had found a place in 200 drinking establishments in Kobe.



Bill Murray singing a karaoke rendition of Roxy Music's "More Than This" in *Lost in Translation*.
Focus Features

Then something big happened: Two club owners from Kobe decided they wanted to open clubs in Osaka. They took the Juke 8 with them. Within a year, my company was sending machines all over Japan. We made 25,000 units. After the first eleven, the rest were all pure white and looked like video arcade games. Osaka became the birthplace of the karaoke boom. It went straight to Tokyo, and soon the whole country, continent and the world became caught up in the karaoke craze.

When I made the first Juke 8s, a brother-in-law suggested I take out a patent. But at the time, I didn't think anything would come of it. I was just hoping the drinking places in the Kobe area would use my machine, so I could live a comfortable life and still have something to do with music. Most people don't believe me when I say this, but I don't think karaoke would have grown like it did if there had been a patent on the first machine. Besides, I didn't build the thing from scratch. I had the idea for the business model. The amp, the microphone, the eight-track player—even the ¥100 box machine—all had patents on them. Today, I could take out a patent on the business model, have someone else make it and get the royalties from the original idea. But at the time, getting a patent for a business model just didn't seem possible.

Even the term "karaoke" itself was not my own invention. In 1952, a famous theatrical troupe in Osaka, the Takarazuka Kageki, performed every night to a live orchestra. One day, the orchestra went on strike. The parent company, Hankyu, apparent-

ly wouldn't give in to their demands and couldn't find a replacement orchestra in time for the scheduled performances. Hankyu called up an electronics company, Matsuda Electronics, and had them bring in a machine that could play orchestra music on a large scale. It is said that someone from Matsuda looked into the pit and said, "The music is playing but the orchestra pit is empty!" The phrase "empty orchestra" is kara okesutura in Japanese, which was shortened to form the word "karaoke."

Recording the karaoke music for eight-track, laser disc and eventually CD was difficult, but the harder task was to convince all of the record labels to cooperate. Like the US, Japan had agencies to represent its singers, but at the time, there was no cooperation among them. Somehow, though, I was able to get the biggest record labels to sign contracts letting Juke 8, and karaoke, use their artists' songs in the same book or library. Now everybody and their dog wants to be in the karaoke databases and song libraries. These days, many singers and songwriters—even the ones who only had one hit song here in Japan—are able to make a living from the royalties they receive every time their song is sung. Japan does billions of dollars a year in karaoke sales.

After laser discs came out, my company no longer manufactured karaoke machines, so I started a related trading company. I had a well-established distributorship and in no time was doing $100 million a year in sales. Soon enough, mail service and telephone lines were used for distribution, and songs were sent directly to companies or drinking places. There was no need to visit people, no need to reach out and touch anyone. I could just sit back, do practically nothing and make half a million dollars a year. I had everything going for me—but nothing to do. I fell into a very deep depression and didn't want to do anything, see anybody or talk to anyone. I handed my company over to my brother, made him the president and walked away. I had lost interest in everything. I didn't even want the money.



As it happens, it was my dog, Donbei, who got me back on the road to enjoying life and inventing. But I'm happy to say that for many people, karaoke has done the same.

In Japan, the 70s were not a good time. Companies went bankrupt, many people lost their jobs and many businessmen committed suicide. There were 35,000 suicides in Japan in 1971—the year we started placing our karaoke machines. But as karaoke caught on in Kobe, Osaka, Tokyo and finally throughout Japan, it seemed that people started to enjoy life a little more and were able to forget some of the stress.

I've heard many stories about people who had been mentally sick—mostly sinking into nervous depression—until karaoke came along. I received letters from a number of people saying that karaoke machines were being placed in hospitals as a rehabilitation tool and helping people get better. One of my close friends was cured from his depression when he started singing karaoke. Even today, you can find a number of clinics and hospitals with karaoke machines. (I think a lot of the doctors and nurses use the machines to polish up their singing voices, too.)

I've received faxes and letters from around

the world: Russia, the US, most of Asia, and a few places I've never heard of. The most poignant was from Vietnam. A poor family who worked in the fields had heard about karaoke. Their daughter loved to sing, and they saved until they could buy a karaoke machine for her. She practiced and practiced and is now apparently one of the most famous and successful singers in Vietnam. She invited me to meet her. I humbly declined for the simple reason that she couldn't have made me feel any better than I did reading her letter: "Thank you for karaoke."

In 1999, *Time Magazine* chose me as one of the top twenty people to have influenced the 20th century. I was overwhelmed. They said Gandhi had changed the way people lived their lives in the daytime, and karaoke had changed the way people spent their nights. Can you imagine your accomplishments being mentioned in the same breath as Gandhi?

The next highlight was being chosen to receive the Ig Nobel Peace Prize at Harvard. The committee wanted me to give a speech. I've given speeches all over Japan, but never one in English. The people at Harvard told me that I needed to prepare two speeches: an acceptance and a longer address. I was also told that if I exceeded my time limit, I would be booed off stage and paper airplanes would be thrown in my direction. Americans do silly things, I thought, but I was game.



Inoue preparing for his Ig Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech at Harvard University, 2004.
Courtesy of Daisuke Inoue

I had just met an American living in Japan, and he helped me write the speech. My wife, my American friend Scott and I spent hours polishing my presentation so that everyone would understand me. Scott said I should break the ice with some kind of joke, so we practiced a couple of American jokes and then he taught me an American song that he said would make everyone in the audience go crazy. I found out later that the song was used in a Coke commercial in the 70's. Karaoke started in the 70's, so I thought it was a perfect match. Scott sang it, and I taped it. I listened to it for a couple of hours after he left, again on the airplane and once more after we arrived at the professor's home where we stayed.

The big day came and I was called out onto the stage to thundering applause. A very warm and exciting feeling came over me. I'd known that karaoke had reached the shores of the US, but this was the first time I'd felt it. I knew I could do this speech. I spoke slowly but firmly, as my wife and Scott had directed. I always wear my hair in a ponytail, so my first words were, "I am the last Samurai, but Tom Cruise cannot come tonight." My first English joke, and the audience was laughing!

By the end of my speech, I was so happy it was over that when I tried to re-

member my song, my mind went blank. So I asked the audience to wait for a second, pulled out my pocket tape recorder, listened to the first few words and then began:

> *I want to teach the world to sing, in perfect harmony...*

Not only did the audience join in, but I was given a standing ovation, apparently the first and only one to date in the fourteen-year history of the Ig Nobel.

What have I done since inventing the karaoke machine? One very simple invention was a personal karaoke book. It has places to write the numbers of your favorite songs, the keys you liked to sing them in, and anything else you wanted to remember. There is a section for Mom and Dad, brother and sister, friends and even the dog (if the dog could sing). The book was a hit and sold 30,000 copies its first month on sale. I did take a patent out on that one!

I also created the prototype for a cockroach-killing machine that was simple to use, safe for people and the environment, and got rid of the bugs that crawled into karaoke machines and ate the wires. This, too, became an instant hit.

I just saw the opening of a movie called *Karaoke*, which is all about me. The actor who plays me is six feet tall. I've never been six feet tall before! My higher vantage point has given me a whole new perspective on my life. My wife says that the actress who plays her part is quite beautiful, but that she was much better looking at that age.

I now live on the top of a mountain in Kobe, Japan, with my wife, my daughter, her three daughters and eight dogs, all different breeds. There's a lot of wildlife in our neighborhood, including deer, boars and a little animal called a tanuki, or a raccoon dog. Every night I put my three granddaughters into the bath and we sing songs, splash water and enjoy each other's company. About once a week we pull out the karaoke books and have a contest to see who can sing the most songs before going hoarse. It is a time we all look forward to, and it is my way to honor karaoke and pass on the tradition to the next generation. I may not have the original patent (some say I would have made $80 million last year—and that was a bad year), but I have good friends and family that I love, and I can't help but smile every day.

Daisuke Inoue has been living for eighteen years in Nishinomiya City, Japan, with his wife, eldest daughter and seven dogs; three more of his dogs are presently in police and rescue training, to learn how to help in any natural disaster. Daisuke's latest invention is an all-purpose natural liquid detergent that is strong in use but gentle to nature. As of 2005, Inoue's movie, entitled *Karaoke*, was available on a Japanese DVD, with an English-dubbed version to follow. In 2008 he was the first Japanese invited to become an honorary member of the Chinese Entertainment Equipment Technology Association. That same year, at a live charity auction in Japan, he sold three million t-shirts emblazoned with the logo "I Love China," to help raise money for victims of the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake.

The editors would like to thank David Haskell and Nina Peacock, formerly of *Topic,* for their kind permission to rerun the piece, Robert Scott for his eager translation and facilitation, and, most of all, Mr. Daisuke Inoue, whose wonderful invention changed our lives.

The Golden Likeness

Ariel Ron





"Copperton!"

Goldsworth called from his deathbed, emaciated and weak from the ravages of an illness he now knew could not be defeated. Removing the slim key that hung these many years round his neck, he summoned the strength of will, so diligently steeled over the course of a long and successful career in the unsteady business of a merchant, to rise from his repose, lurch toward his desk, and unlock its bottom drawer.

"Yes, Mr. Goldworth," came the reply at last, as Copperton appeared at the door.

"Copperton," Goldsworth repeated. He heaved with the unaccustomed effort of motion, and readied himself to speak with the clarity and force requisite to the moment. "In this drawer you will discover a sheet of simple instructions. You may find them curious, even singular, yet you are to follow them precisely and without

delay, so that I may yet gaze upon their issue before hastening to my grave."

"Sir?" came the hesitant reply.

"You've heard me, Copperton, precisely and without delay!"

Copperton shuddered. The thunder in Goldsworth's voice lingered in the air, and, for a moment, the full weight of the old man's still-robust frame, supported by one arm planted firmly on the oak desktop, shook with the muted force of long-censored emotion. At the close of an interminable period, Goldsworth brought his arm up to his chest and shuffled back toward the bed. Stepping forward, Copperton gingerly opened the drawer and took hold of the slightly worn sheet within. Three times he read its lone sentence to overcome his unbelief and grasp the full import of its meaning. Finally, turning toward the bed while averting his eyes, he whispered, "It will be done as quickly as circumstance will possibly allow, sir," and immediately ran out of the room, hurrying into the gloomy, rain-soaked streets on his way to the offices of Sterling & Associates, Goldsworth's longtime attorneys.



The Sterling building was an imposing granite rampart. It now appeared as dark and lifeless as one would expect at ten o'clock on a damp and chilly September night. Copperton knew, however, that the second-floor window overlooking the back alley would be casting out its pallid yellow light, signaling that old man Sterling was at work in his private study.

"Come in, Copperton," said Sterling upon opening the back door for the slender chief clerk. The two men trudged up the servants' steps to the study, where Sterling regained his seat behind an ancient desk while Copperton stood in the chairless space before it. The gas lamp that illuminated their faces cast pointed shadows about the bookshelves that surrounded them. "Now then, what brings you hither at such a late hour," Sterling began, "and on an evening as dreary as this? Has your employer succumbed at last?"

Copperton faltered as he considered his reply. On his brief journey through the nighttime streets he had thought only of practical matters, but now he began to ponder his own position. He therefore evinced a great perplexity as he leaned forward with his arm outstretched, offering to Sterling the sheet with Goldsworth's instructions, adding in a quizzical tone, "In body Mr. Goldworth retains substantial vigor, yet in mind I cannot but wonder."

"Oh?" said Sterling, eyebrows raised; and then, after perusing the blue sheet, "ah, indeed." A heavy stillness fell on the room as the two men contemplated the magnitude of its lone sentence. At length Copperton broke the silence.

"He instructed me, sir, very distinctly, to proceed 'precisely and without delay.' Yet, as I have said, I cannot but wonder if that is the correct course."

Sterling tilted his head downward so that he might peer at Copperton over his spectacles, fixing the clerk in a gray-eyed gaze of such galvanic force that it belied the old lawyer's otherwise mole-like appearance. Then, in the measured cadence of long practice, he declaimed, "It is not for us to question Mr. Goldsworth's motives, my dear Copperton. We must be content to accept these words as the faithful and transparent representations of his most earnest wishes, and to act accordingly."

Copperton, whose countenance had begun to register a steadily mounting agitation in the flush of his cheek, felt an icy sting in Sterling's admonition. "But think of what it would mean!" he cried. "The

disposal of an empire of assets, the shuttering of a firm employing scores. And for what purpose?" He began to pace forward and back within the study's small open space, twirling one end of his mustache with a skeletal forefinger. Then, stopping suddenly, he murmured, as if to himself, "vanity, all vanity." His external person frozen, Copperton's inner turmoil only increased. Before his mind's eye all of his striver's dreams presented themselves in turn. That very morning they had seemed on the cusp of realization, as bona fide and substantial as the Goldsworth name itself; yet now all that had been solid melted into air. He resumed his agitated movement and continued extemporaneously against his better judgment, his voice rising to a high pitch. "I had flattered myself—I tell you now, sir—I had flattered myself that he might leave me, if not his fortune, certainly a sufficient capital to begin fairly upon my own enterprise." Again Copperton stopped. He raised his hands to his mouth only to fling them back to his sides, raise them again, and gesticulate wildly. "Have I not labored at his side these twenty years, executing his every instruction with cheerful alacrity? Have I not been the tireless switchman of his far-flung network of exchanges? Sir, I submit to you that if a firm's proprietor is its brains, its head clerk is its very heart, the regulator of its life-giving circulation!"

Sterling, perhaps not entirely unsympathetic, impassively appraised his interlocutor's state of mind. At the conclusion of the outburst, he shrewdly measured out the silence, again fixing Copperton with his steely gaze. A few seconds only, he knew, but an eternity almost for Copperton. "That is all very well," he said at last, "yet Mr. Goldsworth has issued instructions that must be obeyed." Again he paused, calculating the gap in conversation. "It cannot be otherwise, as you are well aware. Now, Copperton, we have much work ahead of us. Return home, sleep as soundly as you may, and tomorrow we shall commence."

By dint of long experience, Sterling had retained his outward composure, yet he too felt a certain perturbation. Long after Copperton had left he remained at his desk reading legal papers while also wondering at the unexpected turn of events. Thus he could not resist, the night's work at last completed, the compulsion to examine once more the sheet with Goldswoth's strange instructions.

The stationery was of an ordinary blue laid paper variety commonly used in formal business correspondence. One side, headed by the printed letterhead of the Goldsworth firm but otherwise blank, was slightly yellowed with age and oddly mottled by a haphazard pattern of small inky dots and streaks, as if it had been colonized by a peculiar mold. On the reverse, beside the old man's signature, was a single sentence in a hand so angular it practically jutted off the page. It said only this:

"Liquidate every last cent's worth of my holdings, and render from the equivalent a statue of my likeness in pure gold."



That very night Goldsworth lay awake in his bed all but motionless, suspended by some indistinct pain that newly emanated from deep within his abdomen. Only his eyes flitted about, searching the empty darkness. Yet though his bodily rest was disturbed, his mind found itself surprisingly at ease. It unwound itself, as it were, in complacent remembrances of his childhood on the old homestead. Perhaps even then he had known that his ambitions could never be contained within the narrow compass of the life of a farmer, yoked to the plow as surely as were the oxen. As a young man he had therefore set out for the city seeking a clerkship, and having obtained one, had worked zealously for

his employer's interests, keeping faith that in this he forwarded his own.

And his faith was soon enough rewarded, for in a few years the senior partners selected him to travel the western circuit as the firm's agent. Though ever assiduous in his duties, he had been bold in his own speculations, trading this city lot for that on the strength of intelligence little better than rumor and a capital little greater than the currency of his character. Yet fate had smiled upon him once more and he had returned with a substantial profit for his employers and a not insubstantial one for himself. Then, in an endeavor almost reckless, as he now thought, he joined in a venture to China as junior partner and shipboard factor. Two years he spent traversing the world's oceans, plotting a series of small trading runs for even smaller profits in order to gather the silver that, almost without substitute, would be accepted in barter by the Canton syndicate. At long last he returned with his small fortune much augmented, and making two more trips to the Far East, accumulated enough to embark on the career of an independent merchant. Now, many years later, it was he who stood at the head of a venerable commercial house, dispatching his own agents round to distant foreign ports and remote western settlements.

Having thus come full circle in his reminiscences, Goldsworth allowed his eyes to cease their aimless wandering and stare fixedly into the darkness. The final accounting was close at hand and, certainly, he had come out ahead. He pictured his golden likeness several times his actual stature, a colossus of commerce towering above one of the city's public squares or some such place. He reached for the image, his eyeballs bulging out of their sockets. He longed to behold it realized and to grasp at last, in one compact embodiment, a lifetime of mercantile toil. For was it not true that every minute of labor expended, every little bit of experience gained, had contributed its mite to his fortune?

And yet what did his endeavors amount to, these countless exchanges of disparate commodities, this incessant movement—troublesome and vexing—of every conceivable matter this way and that? His dreams were a riotous jumble of strange men and miscellaneous cargoes, of overlong columns of sums that ran through infinite ledgers, journals, daybooks and diaries, the bottom line ever on the next page. What it all came to, he could not figure. The more he tried to order the mass of his transactions, the more they resolved into naught but a Gordian tangle, ponderous and impenetrable.

Like a theatrical magician, Goldsworth had stood upon the world's stage, converting one object into another. A hogshead of tobacco rematerialized as a pair of silken slippers; a consignment of Indian opium, in a puff of smoke, turned to painted Chinese porcelain. And like the magician he had taken his rightful fee, though himself but partly comprehending the inner mystery of the event. Over the years portions of his growing aggregate had been prudently converted into bank notes and stocks; titles, deeds and mortgage contracts; bonds and debentures of every description. Yet this mammoth pile of scribbling only represented the value of his conjuring. It was not, in and of itself, equivalent to it, for the papers were merely claims—legally enforceable, to be sure, but, in such a state, little more than a mess of individual wills. Now his agents would effect a final magic act, converting the symbols of his labors into the substance of gold, that divine spark which an all-knowing Providence, by instilling in man an innate yearning for its glimmer, had made the eternal bedrock of value and a perpetual unit of account. It seemed appropriate to form this mass into his own likeness, for, after all, it amounted to a complete summation of his life's efforts.

Like the stamp on a minted coin, its surface would plainly certify its true content.

Thus satisfied in his way, Goldsworth fell at last into slumber, unaware of the frantic despondency which at that very moment gripped the New York offices of Jay Cooke & Company. In only a few hours it would gush forth in torrents of frothy financial frenzy, sweeping all before it. Panic had breached the levy.



And yet time remained before all the world would learn of it. The next day, Sterling awoke and dressed himself in the usual manner. The weather, he noted when he stepped out his door on the way to the club where he daily took his breakfast and morning newspaper, continued unseasonably dreadful. Despite the drizzle, a crowd of tradesmen had gathered in the central quadrangle to hear a Greenbacker speak on the currency question. Nearby a noble-looking farmer and his sons, their cart loaded for market, paused to receive the interesting discourse, which Sterling, too, could not help overhearing on his way across the open space.

"Good citizens of the Republic," the speaker began, "are you not the bone and sinew of this great democracy?" A few hurrahs from the crowd greeted the opening. "Now, good citizens, you are told that gold is the eternal and immutable standard of value. But I stand before you and ask, was it gold that stained the fields of Gettysburg a profoundly somber crimson? Was it gold that breached the rebel lines at Shiloh? Was it gold that smashed the iron shackles of the bondsman, only to beat those very shackles into ploughshares, for the greater glory of productive labor?" The crowd responded with shouts of "No!" and "Never!" and "'Twas us!"

The Greenbacker raised his arms to signal for quiet. "No, indeed," he resumed more softly, "for it was the good citizens of this illustrious Union, associated together in common and united effort, who did all these things. Reflect upon it for a moment, and you shall instantly comprehend that it is to the General Government that we look to guarantee the value of our currency, and hence the efforts of our labors. It is the General Government that charters banks and regulates their note issues. It is the General Government that upholds the laws without which commerce could not continue for a single day. And yet we hear our esteemed capitalists and merchant princes solemnly declare that only gold, a substance of trifling intrinsic worth, can form the basis of a currency…"

A chorus of hurrahs registered the crowd's approval of these remarks. Sterling, however, perceived the scene with agitation. The more he heard, in fact, the more he sensed a brewing indigestion which, by a sort of reflex capillary action, seemed to seep into his every facial muscle, souring his countenance. Indeed, he felt great relief when the Greenbacker's booming voice had finally grown faint with distance. To think of it: a man of education and evident oratorical skill indulging in such insouciant demagoguery. Undoubtedly he was up to his ears in debt and hoped to clear his way out by means of a political campaign that could only eventuate in ruinous inflation. "We, the producers…" he heard the Greenbacker continue as he turned the corner.

Arrived at the club and ensconced in a capacious arm chair by the fire in the sumptuously appointed great hall, Sterling turned to another member similarly situated and, after summarizing the Greenbacker's address, nearly spit out his conclusion: "Nonsense and humbuggery of the most insidious sort. Sir, I tell you with all due modesty that I contributed my share to the cause of the Union by a substantial investment in 5-20s. And I was prepared to do more, mind you, should the war effort have required it. But do you



suppose that now, a near decade past General Sherman's raising of Georgia, which practically put an end to our great national feud, I should hazard no small part of my fortune on so flimsy a foundation as the star-struck theories of a few government officials? And elected—or, worse, installed in their offices to do the biddings of political patrons so elected—by a rabble as untutored in the ways of business as it is volatile in its passions? I ask you, sir, does not the mere asking of the question answer it?" Sterling peered over his spectacles, glowering significantly at his silent interlocutor, from whose perspective his eyes appeared to achieve a resplendent silvery finish. He continued, "Specie—and I am not to be understood as including, under that head, that lesser metal so unremittingly foisted upon us by our western mining interests—specie is the one sound basis of a currency, and the only true fundament of value."

The utterance of this profound truth within the refined and tasteful surroundings of the great hall left Sterling comforted. Nor was his ease very much disturbed when he turned to the morning paper and read the news of Cooke's collapse. His own rather timid investments, he was certain, would likely remain secure. In any case, there was sure to be much work now as creditors and debtors alike sorted out their affairs. Thus reassured, Sterling reflected on his choice to pursue a profession in the law. Not for him the anxieties of commerce, wherein even great men might awake to find their accumulated fortunes shrunk to naught by an imperious happenstance. The law, on the other hand, was a most dependable commodity, for its terms of trade were grounded in the constancy of truth.



At noon Copperton and Sterling sat in the latter's office, exchanging the latest intelligences and attempting to set their course. Business had come to a halt, and many of Goldsworth's assets, beside his now-worthless stock certificates indicating an ownership share in Cooke's Northern Pacific railroad scheme, were plunging deeper into the abyss by the hour.

"The traders are in a positive fright," said Copperton. "'Tis madness to dispose of Mr. Goldsworth's affairs before confidence is restored. They shall return ten cents on the dollar, if that. We must remain calm until the storm spends itself. Then shall be the time to fulfill Mr. Goldsworth's instructions as he would wish to see them fulfilled."

Sterling eyed Copperton cannily as he mulled the latter's words, readily guessing that their ulterior intent was delay for the purpose of changing the old man's mind. "You know very well that your employer may not live another fortnight, nay, a week, let alone the years until a normal state of affairs obtains once more. We have no choice but to do as best we can, and we must move quickly to salvage what we may before all is engulfed by the gale."

To this Copperton could make no reply. That night, however, he entered Goldsworth's chamber and, lighting the lamp by the bed, explained in great detail the dark pall cast by the crisis, concluding with his views as to the likely course of events, whereby he attempted to hold out the promise of a balmy sunrise on some indefinite horizon. He hoped such a prospect might induce his employer to rescind, or at least suspend, the liquidation order. Yet, when he concluded, he perceived that the old man had comprehended not a word of it, for he appeared to be within a kind of trance.

"Is that you, Copperton?" he asked, "What of the gold? The work, is it completed at last?" Bewildered, Copperton stammered a wordless response, yet Goldsworth now seemed not to notice his presence at all. Suddenly the old man's body shot up as if thrust forward by an invisible power. His arms, extended to their utmost to support the upturned torso, trembled like struts under some appalling strain. Sweat gilded his neck. Only now, as his face entered the lamplight, did Copperton notice Goldsworth's eyes. Their pupils were dilated to the widest extent, as if struggling to contain an expansive phantasmagoria. The scene filled Copperton with terror. He shrank from the unfathomable vision, fleeing through the darkened house even as the old man's face remained illuminated by the burning lamp which he had forsaken near the doorway.

There was nothing for Copperton to do but assist Sterling in disposing of Goldsworth's investments. As he had feared, most yielded a fraction of their worth from only days earlier. This fact formed the constant subject of Sterling's remarks. Indeed, though his tone remained ever somber, Sterling recalled the extraordinary losses so habitually that Copperton nearly suspected him of harboring a secret pleasure, even glee, in witnessing the disaster. As for Copperton himself, the procedure left him evidently unnerved, for he conducted the whole affair with a peculiar correctness that suggested a man struggling to triumph over his own passions. Indeed, it seemed at all times as if his head and feet were being pulled in opposite directions, so that his lean, upright body sustained the exquisite tension of a bowstring.



In this manner Copperton managed the fire sale of assets until almost all had been disposed of. It now fell upon him to engage the services of a sculptor. He thus found himself one afternoon in the stu-

dio of an artist by the name of Clayfield, well-known for his monumental bronzes of the nation's revolutionary heroes.

"Tell me, Mr. Copperton," said Clayfield after the outlines of the work had been discussed, his posture, though framed by a large, stout figure, displaying a kind of affable complacency, "is Mr. Goldsworth a Spiritualist?"

"I should think not," said Copperton.

"Ah, well, never mind then. I had thought there was something rather occult in his will, as if he intended that his soul should find its everlasting home in my work. Rather vain, I suppose. You see I am curious as to the question of why."

Copperton remained stone-faced. "I haven't an inkling as to Mr. Goldsworth's motives," he said with a resentment barely disguised, "nor do I wish to relieve my ignorance in this respect."

"Surely you must wonder!"

"I do not."

"You possess an admirable restraint, Mr. Copperton. I do not believe that I shall so confine my speculations. Indeed, just now it seems to me that it must signify some desperate attempt to halt that fundamental law of nature, the perpetual circulation of all things. Now sir, I am a sculptor, but do not mistake my work for the arrest of action. No, Mr. Copperton, it is quite the opposite. My ambition is to represent that greatness which is always progressive. I aim to *move* the spectator, sir! For all is movement, or should be. Why, even the atoms of which we are composed never cease their cycle. I breathe in oxygen, removing a quantity from the atmosphere. My body consumes said quantity in the process of its action. At the same time I exhale a measure of nitrogen, adding a like amount to the atmosphere. As if by design, this precise extent is then taken up by a plant, which releases that quantity of oxygen which I had removed. Balance is restored, nothing is lost, yet everything is ever in motion."

"I regret to inform you," replied Copperon with cool formality, "that for some years past scientifical men of the highest eminence have rendered your beautiful theory perfectly quaint. All might remain in motion for the time being, yet no stable balance obtains. It is entropy, sir, and the whole is consigned to an ultimate oblivion."

"Is that so?" replied Clayfield indifferently, losing not a whit of his cheer. "I am no profound philosopher of science—that I readily admit—yet I can tell you that when I was a boy, the farmers could not afford to send their grains to market, so they converted them to hogs and drove them east where, eaten as pork by working men, they were turned to muscle and thence consumed as labor in the production of all manner of wonderful thing, which returning at last to our humble home delighted and amazed my young mind. Now, can you tell me that there is not a natural and continuous exchange of ideas, objects and feelings, an astonishing movement to all of life?"

Copperton's annoyance mounted. What reason had he to indulge such idle pomposity? Abruptly, then, he changed the topic of discussion. "Yes, well, that is all very fine, Mr. Clayfield, but perhaps we can return to the business at hand. The question is, can you do the work?"

"I believe so," replied Clayfield, showing not a trace of affronted feeling, for his fortress of good spirits, Gibraltar-like, was unassailable. "I must advise you, however, that bronze would form a superior material. It too, of course, will submit to the law of natural disintegration in time. Yet, as the relics of the ancient world well attest, it is the most durable substance known for the purpose, whereas gold is

too soft, and is subject to the disfiguring accumulation of innumerable dents and cuts."

Copperton frowned, vexed that the duty he so unwillingly obeyed should throw up added obstacles. "Mr. Clayfield, it is absolutely of the essence that the statue be of gold, and pure gold at that. Might it be practicable to protect it somehow, perhaps within an enclosure of some sort?"

"A very apt suggestion," replied Clayfield jovially. He paused to consider the plan from a practical point of view. "Ah, I know precisely the thing called for—a kind of glass and steel gazebo, wouldn't you say? Yes, it should not present much difficulty."

"Very well," said Copperton curtly, still more vexed at the ease with which the solution had been found, for his initial irritation had been accompanied by a secret burst of hope, distantly sensed and consciously unacknowledged, that perhaps here was the end of the matter, a natural mandate against Goldsworth's madness. In spite of his disappointment, or perversely because of it, Copperton pressed on in his pursuit of the details so crucial to any successful business.

"You understand, also," he said to Clayfield, "that Mr. Goldsworth is in no condition to pose."

"He is well enough, I suppose, to stand for a brief session of photography?"

"I imagine so."

"Then all is solved. I shall send a man whom I know to work most efficiently."

"And you will be able, from a mere photograph, to create a precise likeness?"

"Mr. Copperton, I assure you that one good image of the face is all that is truly required."

Sterling drew up the contract that very day. It stipulated that Clayfield would receive a certain quantity of gold, the exact amount yet to be determined, retaining as his fee a given percentage, which figure was specified as a range, within a narrow scope, to account for the somewhat indeterminate amount that would remain in the mold's sprueing system after casting. The large majority of the substance, of course, would form Goldsworth's likeness.



While Clayfield considered the technical modifications incident upon casting with gold rather than bronze, Copperton and Sterling busied themselves with the final arrangements. They contracted with the municipal authorities to have Goldsworth's figure placed permanently upon a marble pedestal at the northeast corner of the central quadrangle, enclosed

within a dome-like structure of steel and glass styled after the London Crystal Palace. Next they disposed of his last remaining assets, including the sale of his private estate, the deed to be transferred upon death. Finally, leaving aside what they calculated to be the expenses for their own services and several others, such as the ultimate interment of the body, they converted the last of the proceeds into pure gold. Here, again, Goldsworth's stockpile was diminished, for the effect of the financial chaos, annexed to the existing influence of an inconvertible currency, was to induce a high premium for the precious metal. At last, however, their work was almost done.

The gold itself arrived at Clayfield's ample studios on a clear Sunday morning in November. In spite of its smallness relative to what it might have been in happier times, it still comprised what to any ordinary individual would have been a fantastic fortune. Two porters, two Pinkerton agents, an assayer, and a notary public joined Copperton and Sterling as they accompanied its progress from the bank vaults to the artist's studio. After Clayfield's guaranteed fee had been duly measured out and certified, a giant, shapeless heap of gold remained. It stood ponderously upon the rough wooden floor at the center of the studio, reflecting the sunlight that struck it directly through the clearstory windows. The entire party gaped in amazement. None had ever seen so much brilliance, and each thought only of its marvelous potentialities. The image of the formless mass thus splintered, as if by a prism, becoming at once and simultaneously nine separate visions as various and distinct as were the nine faces that observed it so intently. The extraordinary scene, however, lasted but a minute, for the men swiftly recovered themselves and, taking hold of their canes and stealing their final glances, left Clayfield alone with the golden pile.



The final work did not take long, for Clayfield was a skillful and experienced sculptor who had, moreover, invested considerably in a variety of useful labor-saving devices. Thus, well within the period stipulated in the contract, Copperton stood at the bed of his soon-to-be-erstwhile employer, relaying the news that the likeness was finally complete. Instantly, a jolt of electricity seemed to infuse the wan old man with the vim and vigor of younger days. The next morning, no longer the muttering old fool he had at times appeared in recent weeks, Goldsworth strode unaided to the carriage that waited to take him to Clayfield's studios.

Upon entering the spacious interior that housed his likeness, Goldsworth demanded to be left alone. The likeness stood in the center of the room, hidden by a shroud of vermillion crushed velvet. The overcast day provided little light, creating the illusion of a larger object, yet as he approached it, Goldsworth noticed its rather ordinary dimensions. Now standing before the cloaked figure, he leaned on his cane so that he might reach more easily the nearest protruding corner of the shroud. He tugged on it sharply, causing it to slide off in a single smooth motion. The golden double stood revealed. Immediately Goldsworth noted the uncanny resemblance between it and himself. Slowly he circled it, carefully compar-

ing the various parts of the two bodies. He held his left arm next to its opposite and noted their identity, stood face to face with his likeness so that the brims of their hats appeared to describe a single plane. Even the canes, each topped by the small carved skull of a *memento mori*, were identical in form and the angle of grip. Indeed, the golden figure's proportions matched those of the original with perfect precision. Only the eyes betrayed a discernible difference, for there Clayfield had carved small pits which, forming shadowed recesses, gave the viewer standing at a distance the illusion of dark pupils. Upon close inspection, however, they produced a bizarre effect, as if the figure were staring into itself.

Goldsworth felt confounded. In view of the immense wealth he had possessed before the financial panic, he had imagined his likeness much larger. Yet his disappointment in this regard was not of so great a significance as one might suppose. For it was not the smallness that truly disturbed him so much as the exactitude with which the statue seemed to replicate the still living body standing before it. He had believed, all this time, that the figure would manifest his life in full, condensing its innumerable transpirings within a single compact sphere. His multiform accomplishments, which memory strained so mightily to array in their correct relations, would thus be presented in a synoptic view and instantly grasped. And yet, such precision seemed to mock his longings for a comprehensive summation, as if to say that all his pains had culminated in nothing more than what he already was. The remarkable symmetry of it struck him as simply horrible.

A preternatural strangeness took hold of the room as Goldsworth, standing almost motionless, stared uncomprehendingly at his duplicate. For several minutes his face registered no expression, the calculating merchant's mind behind it cast irrevocably adrift upon a dark and foreboding sea of bewilderment. Suddenly, however, a momentary sunburst sent a ray of light through the clearstory window. For a fleeting instant it lodged in the concave pit of the statue's right eye, as if to gather and focus the vast compass of Goldsworth's mercantile existence into a single point, wherefrom it emerged as a concentrated beam, passing directly into the fleshy eyeball opposite and instantaneously searing the retina within. Goldsworth grasped at his face and fell to one knee, a primal shriek of pain escaping his lungs and shattering the silent reverie into which the room itself had seemingly fallen. Copperton, Sterling and Clayfield rushed into the room to investigate the piercing sound. Goldsworth simply stood and, not pausing to speak a word to any of them, strode into the street where he ordered his driver to take him directly home.

Along the city's avenues the diverse multitudes went about their daily bustles. Colorful ladies' dresses and building-side signs twenty feet tall, the huckstering shouts of vendors and the shrill cries of a pint-sized paper boy, the mingled smells of fresh strawberries, horse dung and soot—all jostled together in a kaleidoscope of the senses. Goldsworth perceived this urban scene with detached fury, cupping one hand over his burning left eye while he gripped with the other the ivory skull at the head of his cane. He now felt himself ready, even eager, to be done with this world of

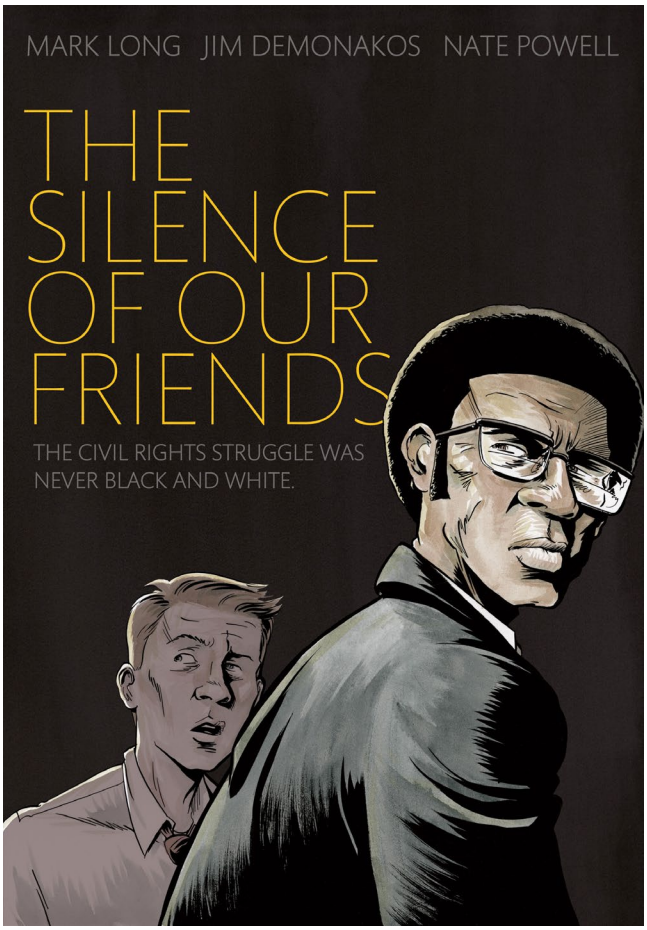
small and inscrutable things. By the time the carriage arrived at its destination, it bore only his corpse.

The likeness, meanwhile, was dutifully placed on the marble pedestal prepared for it at the northeastern corner of the central quadrangle. The city council added a plain brass plaque that read, simply, "In memoriam to the merchant Goldsworth of this city." Encased in its bell-jar mausoleum of steel and glass, the golden statue appeared at once both a profound idol and an ornamental absurdity. For several days passers-by leaned lazily on the wrought iron railing that surrounded the structure, gawking at the brilliant image within. It did not take long, however, for thieves to accomplish the despoliation that, as history records with gloomy regularity, befalls all burial tombs richly endowed with treasure. What occurred next cannot but remain speculation. Yet it is almost certain that the gold, in one form or another, eventually reentered the general circulation of goods. It is said, at least, that within a few weeks of the theft a well-known gold trader made an unusually large sale of the commodity on the New York exchange.



The Silence of Our Friends

Hannah Carney



Elsewhere in this issue of The Appendix, *we interview Nate Powell, the illustrator of* March, *Congressman John Lewis's graphic memoir of his life and fight in the Civil Rights movement, and excerpt from its pages. This wasn't Powell's first foray into the racial history of the American South, however. In 2012,* First Second Books *published* The Silence of Our Friends, *his collaboration with co-authors Mark Long and Jim Demonakos on a memoir-like novel about Long's childhood in 1960s Houston. In the wake of* March*'s wide media success,* Appendix *local history editor Hannah Carney turns back to* The Silence of Our Friends *to explore how it navigated that similar terrain of history and memory.*

The story begins in suburban Houston, 1968: a wide, empty street, power lines stretching to the horizon, neat low-slung ranch houses with evenly clipped lawns, a big car with flashy fins. A young white boy crouches behind a bush, pretending to creep up on a Vietcong soldier. After some shouting and mild blackmail, he lets his sister join in. Later they join their mother and watch the now-infamous footage of the execution of a Vietcong soldier by Vietnam's Chief of National Police. Their earlier game suddenly seems less playful. The boy stands glued to the screen, and his sister comforts their horrified mother.

It's a moment of intense foreshadowing: in the months to come, the family's father will become involved in a more homegrown episode of police violence, when a peaceful protest of black students in Houston ends in a hail of police bullets and a landmark court case.

The friendship between the boy's father, a white journalist named Jack Long, an African American Texas Southern University professor named Larry Thompson, and their families lies at the heart of *The Silence of Our Friends*, a recent graphic novel based on a little-known chapter of civil rights history. Its author, Mark Long, grew up in Houston in the 1960s and experienced much of what happens in the novel. Jack Long is based on his father and Thompson is based on a black activist named

Larry Thomas. Together with co-author Jim Demonakos and artist Nate Powell, Long uses the graphic novel format to craft an authentic and believable re-creation of his memories of the not-so-distant past. The result is a deeply moving, often unsettling portrait of American racism as compelling for adults as it is for high school history classes.

In the graphic novel, Long meets Thompson while working as a television reporter in Houston's Third Ward. During a protest to allow the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee on TSU's campus, Thompson stands up for Long when a group of African American students threatens to take away his camera and kick him off campus. Long is the only reporter in Houston who tries to provide balanced coverage of the Third Ward, a predominantly black neighborhood, and its student protests. As the leader of those protests, Thompson risks a professional alliance with Long that becomes more personal as they introduce their families to one another.



The graphic novel crescendos with two intensely-charged scenes that test the relationship between these two men and demonstrate the ugliness and violence of segregated Houston. The first begins with a nonviolent student protest on the TSU campus that is met with escalating police brutality, from billy clubs to pistols and machine guns fired at unarmed black students in a university dormitory. During that violence, a Houston police officer is killed, and the novel reconstructs the trial of five students accused of having shot him.

Powell's illustrations bring the protests and trial to life. They evoke a palpable sense of the violence: police march in formation like soldiers, heavily armed with pistols in holsters and rifles slung across their backs. Billy clubs come down on the bodies of protestors on the ground: KRAK! THUD, THUMP. The authors cut



from the scenes of repression to Jack Long behind the camera, his inert lens filming the growing violence. Powell leaves the scenes viewed through Long's camera in pencil, uninked, their faint glassiness mimicking the television screens on which all of this will later be aired. This effect creates an interesting distance that makes the brutality feel more real.

Jack is both within the violence and without. The police hit him with a billy club and yell at him to leave. He stays, and amidst the chaos he sees Larry fall and get beaten by the police. Larry calls out to Jack for help, but the reporter instead retreats under a breezeway with other officers and keeps filming. The noise and violence seem less insistent for a moment. Jack has fulfilled his role as a journalist, but he has also betrayed his friend.

During the book's second climax, the trial of the five black TSU students wrongly accused of killing an officer during the protest, Long's testimony of the event proves crucial—showing that the officer was shot accidentally by a fellow cop. The scene, however, is the novel's weakest moment. According to the author, Mark Long, it's the only part of *The Silence of Our Friends* that is not based on a true account of what happened to him, his father, or Larry Thomas: neither Thomas nor Long was involved in the trial. Long explains, "We used the trial as a way to bring the antagonists and protagonists together, and very deliberately made it the climax, because it would be an opportunity for the characters to articulate in an elevated sense their motivations." It indeed feels deliberate, but it doesn't benefit the book.

Long, Demonakos and Powell do a better job showing characters' motivations in the small, quiet scenes that make up the rest of the book. One evening at the Long's house, Mark's sister Julie tattles on her brother and says that he went "nigger knocking"—ringing doorbells and then running away. The parents are hor-

rified by Julie's casual racism, as unsettled as the reader by how easily Houston's greater racism—the family had recently moved there from less-segregated San Antonio—seeps into their children's lives and becomes normalized.

When asked about the scene, Long explains that "a big theme in the book is the violence of language." The use of the word "nigger" and "that kind of banal, everyday, insidious racism" the word implies are more important to understand, says Long in an interview, than the "mean sheriff who might as well be a Nazi." It's not just the Bull Connors we should study and talk about. It's the ordinary people who go about their lives, oblivious or willfully ignorant to the ways that racism boosts them up and shoves people of color down.

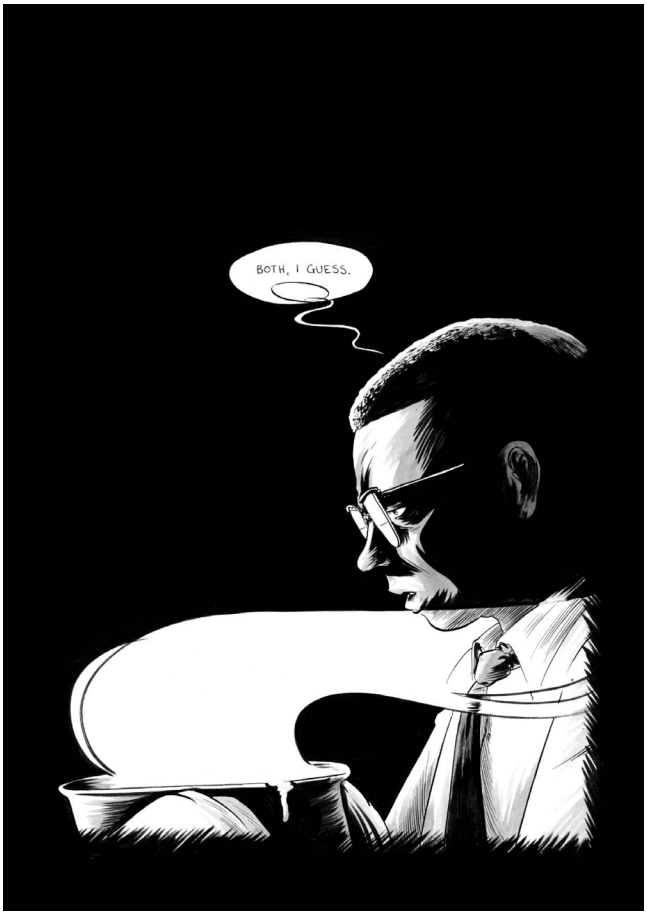
Long and his collaborators are unstinting in their portrayal of white racism and Jack Long's other flaws, which feel painfully real in the narrative. Before dying of cancer in 2009, Jack Long was deeply involved with the writing process and barely hesitated before signing off on the use of his former alcoholism as a key plot point. He had become sober long before, and had worked as a drug and alcohol counselor in Texas prisons.

Long tried to track down Larry Thomas and his family before writing the book, but he wasn't able to locate them—the two families lost touch sometime after the sixties. It's hard not to wonder how the novel might read had the two men kept in touch, and had Thomas contributed his own perspective during the writing of this story.

Still, *The Silence of Our Friends* rings true in its portrayal of the initial wariness of a friendship between a black and a white man in Houston in 1968. In one scene, Larry Thompson and his wife Barbara prepare dinner for their family. Larry tells Barbara that he wants to invite Jack



137



over to their home, and Barbara objects; African Americans didn't typically invite white people into their homes at this time in Houston. She asks whether Larry wants to "use [Jack] or be friends with him?" On a single page with a black background, Larry stands in profile and answers "both, I guess."

In a corner of popular history that sometimes resorts to heroism and cliché, the nuance of *The Silence of Our Friends* offers a deeply personal take on the impact of racism in our country, and is as relevant for students as it is for adults. With hard-won realism, the graphic novel ends not with the conclusion of the TSU Five's trial but with the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. In a beautiful sequence of panels, Powell illustrates a march in King's honor. Long and Thompson—or Thomas—walk beside each other along with their families. The two men join hands. A final haunting quotation from Martin Luther King gives the book its title and turns Long and Thomas's friendship over for scrutiny one last time:

> "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."



Presidential sculptures at the workshop of Houston artist David Adickes.
David Noah

Feet First:
Walking in Houston

Kyle Shelton

Between the Archives and the Streets

People told me that I shouldn't just walk through Houston. But I was there researching the city's history, literally studying its streets, and I wanted to know them.

I'd seen the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and highway plans. Noted how each year's edition illustrated the slow transition from the solid outlines of homes to the dotted lines of proposed rights-of-way and then, with finality, to the heavy stripes of expressways. I needed to see the spots in the city where those lines ran off the page. The world I walked through—between the archives, the libraries, the universities—complicated my vision of Houston. The city's past collided with its concrete and steel now.

The warnings I heard about walking through the city didn't come wholly from worries for my safety as a pedestrian. Some were you-just-don't-want-to-walk-on-the-wrong-side-of-the-track glances from folks who'd lived in Houston for

years. From white people, looking out for one of their own. “Don’t walk on the northside.” “Be careful in the Third Ward.” I didn’t heed them. I didn’t want to find blank spaces in my memories. I wanted to push against what those warnings left unsaid.

Noon on the northside looks a lot like noon in every other part of Houston, it turns out. The light rail is under construction on North Main Street. I cross into the neighborhood by walking through the Judge Alfredo Hernandez tunnel. The archives say the tunnel is an example of the engineering triumphs of the early 1900s. Dozens of train tracks above, four lanes of road below, yearly floods avoided, few accidents. The change in temperature, from sun to dark, raises goosebumps. The sudden darkness leaves me blinking. The tunnel smells like tunnels smell: piss and damp concrete. The pedestrian pathway is raised above the road surface hidden behind thick concrete pillars. I don’t linger.

Out into the sun again. Detour signs point traffic away from the rail line. I hop onto the concrete traffic barriers placed over the sidewalk and walk along them towards Poppa Burger, an old drive-thru that could have been a set for Happy Days. The light rail construction probably hasn’t helped business. There are thirteen of us there while I eat. Two older men. A family of seven. Myself. Three workers—two cooks and the cashier. I was told I couldn’t walk here, but heard I had to eat here: the cognitive dissonance between nostalgia and assumption. I eat to a soundtrack of soft voices and cooing pigeons. The French fries are delicious. I look out at the city where one doesn’t walk.



Poppa Burger, a drive-thru that’s been serving Houstonians for fifty years.
Gary Wise

Discovery Green, Downtown Houston

Moving through a city on foot can be connective, but it also feels intrusive. Some paths, like the Columbia Tap rails-to-trails bikeway, a route that cuts through the center of the Third Ward, open into backyards and once-private porches. Views once afforded only to the closed eyes of freight cars and to bored teenagers balancing on the tracks. Such pathways disorient. Homes and businesses open towards the street, not the old rail line. Approaching the buildings from this angle is like introducing yourself to someone by placing a hand on the small of their back. The view from behind is more intimate. Some homes have chipped paint or sagging sashes. Others, tiny gardens and neatly arranged patio furniture. One resident placed a plank bridge across the ditch from the pathway to the gate of their wrought iron fence. Two or three bikes rest against the bars, ready. Still others seem to be boarded up against the eyes of the walkers and riders that pass them by. High fences. Shuttered windows. Signs that ward off the eyes of passersby.

The north end of the rails-to-trails path comes towards downtown Houston and passes near Discovery Green, a park space in front of the city's main convention center. The park has only been in existence for a decade. Prior to the lake and the amphitheater, the playing field and the dog park, it was two parking lots for the titanic George R. Brown Convention Center. Prior to the parking lots, the land stood at the heart of Texas Eastern Corporation's grand design for a modernistic city center—a 1960s vision plucked from a Bel Geddes scale model—replete with monorails, skywalks, and underground traffic flow. In the humid days of early summer, the Green buzzes with activity. Its jumping fountains pull hundreds of Houstonians in from the hot streets. The space is democratic. Where lines of Chevrolets and Fords once waited for their office-working owners to return, parents now chase toddlers across the playscape. The present overwhelms the landscapes of the past.*

Fifteen or forty years from now the Green might be gone. Perhaps a new parking lot, a hotel, or a highway will stand where the Green is now. A scholar, studying shared social spaces or downtown redevelopment, might sit at a table in an air-conditioned archive and peruse the collected history of this place. A glossy magazine article, a laudatory speech, and photographs of happy families watching a Charlie Chaplin movie on a lazy summer evening.

From collected documents we draw pictures of history, ignoring what lies outside of our lines. The actors we encounter solely in the archives often seem to be cardboard cutouts, destined to repeat the same prerecorded message over and over. All we hear from them are their quotes in the newspaper or a testimony delivered to the City Council. The vagaries of action and reaction, the motions and emotions of the speaker are only rarely displayed in the record. In the archives the situation is controlled. The pages can be turned. The folder can be closed. The box can be ignored.

Back on the Green, ice cream melts and runs down the hand of a small child watching dogs wrestle in the fenced-off play area. The stickiness shines, unrecorded for posterity.



Summer Street

When you turn off of Sawyer, warehouses funnel you towards a gate at the western terminus of Summer Street. All at once they come into view. Forty or so vague shapes. Fallen smoke stacks? Abandoned tractor-trailers? Vague silhouettes stretch away from a chain-link fence.

Once you reach the gate, the shapes come into focus. Faces, not industrial castoffs. Crafted, not abandoned. Thomas Jefferson's head is at least twice my height. Andrew Jackson's could be three times that once you count his well coiffed hair. All forty-four presidents are there in various conditions of disrepair. Some need replastering. Others, a face lift or just an adjustment of their bowtie. At the back of the property a forty-foot version of the Beatles towers over the former heads of state. The storage yard abuts a train track. While no pas-

*Norman Bel Geddes was a famous American industrial designer and architect. One of his most well known designs was the *Futurama* display at the 1939 World's Fair, which depicted a futuristic city dominated by highways, cars, and suburbs.

sengers get to inspect the bald spots of our nation's leaders, at least the engineers of the oft-passing freight trains have a chance to glimpse Millard Fillmore's head through George Harrison's legs.

These plaster molds sit outside the warehouse of sculptor and artist David Adickes, near downtown Houston. The work in the yard forces history, art, and present-day Houston together. To find it, you have to walk or drive into the heart of the once-bustling industrial core between Washington Avenue and the Katy Freeway. The workspace stands surrounded by dozens of warehouses that look just like it. It sneaks up on you; at first you think you are on the wrong street. Only your arrival under Teddy Roosevelt's mustache signals you've found Adickes' building.

But Houston's industrial past, a past that brought the grain silos and rail tracks to Summer Street, is transitioning. Not just to house art workshops and galleries, but to the new trappings of urban living. Two blocks from cement plants, trucking platforms, and sculpted leaders lies a Super Target, a luxury apartment building, and a Payless Shoes. Peaked and rusting roofs of tin and galvanized steel give way to flat-topped shopping centers and humming climate control. I walk through this evolution, my thoughts divided. James Madison's smirk, the passage of time captured in the changing pallet of Washington Avenue's businesses, and the pieces of this part of Houston's history that I've come across in the archives all swimming in my vision. It's hard to tell whether the city is coming or going. It's impossible to see which parts are being erased, which are being drawn for the first time.



Sculptures at David Adickes's workshop.
David Noah

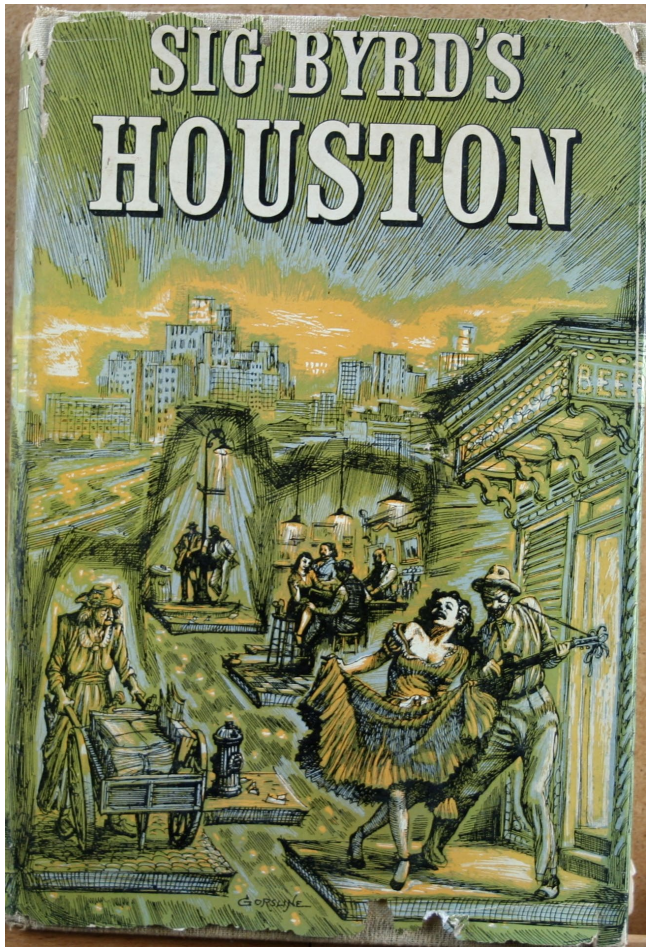
Sig Byrd's Houston

Sigman Byrd walked these same streets as a reporter for the Houston Chronicle in the 1950s. Monkey-bit. Gafftop. El Jefe. Greasy Smith. Byrd filled his columns with the characters that populated Houston's grimier side. He walked through places with names like Catfish Reef, Pearl Harbor, and the Big Casino. He stopped, talked, and jotted at cantinas, beer joints, and flophouses. He talked of businesses come and gone and of drifters who had drifted on. His articles weren't for the people who lived in Catfish Reef. I doubt the men, like Handsome Easley, who dodged cops and tried to scrape out a living in the Fifth Ward, had time to read the four column inches devoted to their story. This was voyeur journalism. Byrd wanted Houstonians living in River Oaks or Sharpstown to know that in the heart of their city a body could "get faded, get your picture made, your shoes shined, your hair cut, your teeth pulled. You can buy lewd pictures, and in the honkytonks you can arrange for the real thing." Far from their tree-

lined, gentle suburban streets, the avenues of downtown Houston offered "quietly cruel streets, where rents are high and laughter comes easy, where violence flares quickly and briefly in the Neon twilight, and if a dream ever comes true it's apt to be a nightmare." Byrd wrote of these places so his readers could learn their city without stepping through its streets.

Are my walks any different than Byrd's? What about the words I write? Who do I write for and what type of city am I presenting?

My Houston is built by archives and walkabouts. Seen through my eyes and subject to my interpretations. Like my scholarship, my experience of Houston passes through my own set of expectations, fears, and knowledge. I spent only eight months in the city. Can I make claims about its past and present? Or does my brief stay make my views an illusion? How many will read me and think, "this guy doesn't know Houston at all?" Do I sensationalize like Byrd? (I am trying hard not to.) Or are there universal parts of Houston somewhere in these phrases, as there were in his? I'm not sure that the Houston I've painted is the Houston others know. It is a city littered with memories. Snippets of documents and facts. Old facades and new developments. People I've watched on the streets and traced on paper. I've walked through all this and I'm still not sure I know how to find my way.



The cover of *Sig Byrd's Houston* (1955) showed the hard-luck characters that populated Houston's juke joints, cantinas and flop houses.

Marguerite Johnson
Barnes Collection,
Woodson Research Center,
Rice University

Allen Parkway opened in the 1930s. Back then it was called Buffalo Park-

way, named for the bayou that ran alongside of it. It carried Houstonians from downtown out to the then-developing, but already trendy, Memorial Park area. Dr. Sam Adams grew up in the all-black Fourth Ward just south of Buffalo Bayou and west of downtown. In the 1920s his family moved a few blocks further west and established a home just below the bayou. At the time of their move this was the outskirts of the developed city. A young Adams recalled playing in the wild growths alongside the water and running home through forests. Shooting turtles off logs and watching flood waters rise and recede. In the late 1920s and early 1930s the city began to build a road. The Adams's neighbor hitched up a mule team and pulled clear the stumps as others hacked away at the bayou's underbrush. The muleteers sang instructions and helped grade the surface. The macadam top eventually gave way to asphalt. The two-lane road to the six-lane Allen Parkway.

The Gregory School, the city's first black elementary school, is now a library. An archive of Houston's black history. It sits in the old Fourth Ward. New Houston is creeping in around it. Colorful, metal-roofed condominiums. A several-hundred unit apartment complex. But pieces of the former life remain: across the street from the Gregory School sits a large mostly-vacant lot. A few shotgun houses in various states of falling squat inside chain-link fences. These old homes, new, or at least newer, when Dr. Adams was a boy, now wait for historic renovation. They're boarded up against the weather and the curious. Raised up on cinder block foundations. Raised up against floods and the passage of time. The Gregory School protects the records of these houses, the stories of families. The photographs of front porches and church suits. It documents rising downtown skyscrapers and sinking next-door homes.

Down the street is Founder's Memorial Cemetery, a registered Texas Heritage Site. It's the resting place for several heroes of the Texas Revolution and one of the founders of the city of Houston. Few, if any, of the families whose lives are documented at the Gregory School were buried here. Their cemetery lies west down Dallas Street another mile. They lived their lives a stone's throw from Heritage. Many of their homes still wait for historical markers.*



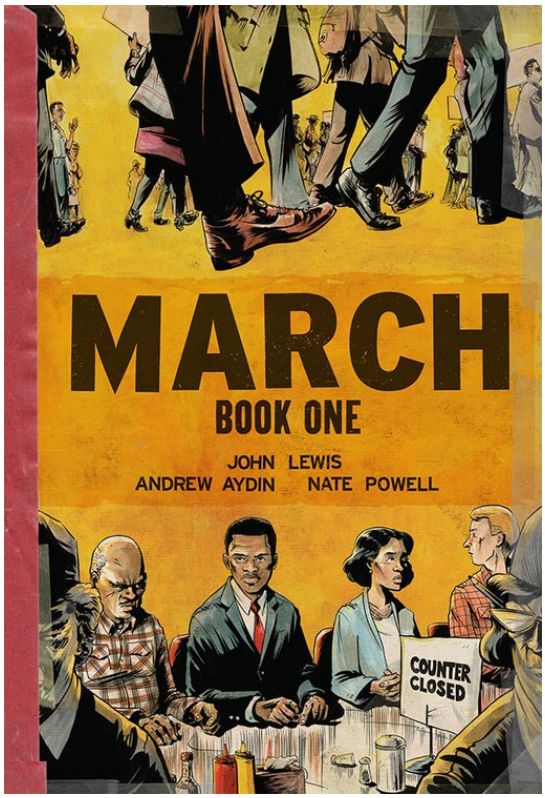
An 1866 cottage in the Fourth Ward.
Wikimedia Commons

*College Park Memorial Cemetery was one of three African American Cemeteries in Houston. It was founded in 1896, but has graves that predate its official opening.

I walk through the Fourth Ward. Past a midday church service. Past the cemetery and the Public Storage Warehouse. I aim my feet towards the bayou. Walk the same ground that Dr. Adams would have walked as a child. I break through the neighborhood. He broke through the underbrush. We reach the water's edge. My way is clear. Stands of trees mark the remnant of the forest Adams played in. I walk on an exercise trail, an asset for a livable city. I am meant to walk here. With the city's natural history, its one unchanneled bayou on my right. With the city's economic pulse, a string of high-rise businesses, a Whole Foods, and a branch of the Federal Reserve on my left. This path runs alongside Allen Parkway. It's asphalt. Laid by heavy machines, pavers, rollers. Laid without singing—or at least without mules. I am meant to walk here. A white guy in tennis shoes, out to keep in shape. I am meant to walk here. A historian tugged between the new and the old, the read and the seen. Don't go to the northside, don't go to the Third Ward. Walk by the bayou, see its public art. Use the pedestrian bridge, not the overpasses. Walk on the bayou trail where the city's past/present/future frame your sight and roll forward together like the languid water of the bayou towards Galveston Bay.

I roll forward. I close my eyes, straining to pick out the shouts of mule drivers from the hum of passing cars. A biker whizzes past me on the path. I look over my shoulder for others. At the water's edge I see Dr. Adams taking potshots at painted turtles.

NOT-SO-FUNNY PAGES



Excerpt:
March, Book One

John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell

The Appendix *is honored to share the following excerpt from US Congressman and Civil Rights hero John Lewis's new graphic memoir,* March. *We interview Andrew Aydin and Nate Powell—the writer and artist who are helping Lewis put his inspiring life into comic book form—elsewhere in this issue, but there's no substitute for the beauty they bring to his story. From his Alabama childhood to his first flush of victory during the Nashville student lunch counter sit-ins, this initial volume of a projected three-part graphic novel brings Lewis's life to the page. And in the wake of this summer's Supreme Court decision striking down a crucial condition of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, it is a story whose message comes at exactly the right time.*

Readers have responded. The Washington Post *has called it a "riveting and beautiful civil-rights story."* USA Today *declared it "Essential reading for just about everyone…While it looks a little different than your average comic, it does tell the story of a true American superhero." And it might also be the first comic in history to get a ringing endorsement by an American president, Bill Clinton: "In* March, *[Lewis] brings a whole new generation with him across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, from a past of clenched fists into a future of outstretched hands."*

The praise is well-deserved. The following excerpt begins after Lewis decides to leave the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville and attempts to transfer to Troy State, back in Alabama, where no black students were allowed. His application is met with silence. He decides to introduce himself to the only person he thinks can help: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.


ONE SATURDAY MORNING IN THE SPRING OF 1958, MY FATHER DROVE ME TO THE GREYHOUND BUS STATION AGAIN.
NEITHER OF US SAID A WORD.
MONTGOMERY
BIRMINGHAM
I BOARDED A BUS, AND TRAVELED THE FIFTY MILES FROM TROY TO MONTGOMERY.
I'D NEVER SEEN A LAWYER BEFORE-- BLACK OR WHITE.
113 MONRO
STREE
NOK NOK
ahem
AND I PRESUME YOU'RE JOHN LEWIS?
YES SIR. ATTORNEY GRAY?
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DRIVE OVER TO THE CHURCH.

67



68


KLIK KLIK
NOK NOK
come in!
so--
ARE YOU THE BOY FROM TROY?
ARE YOU JOHN LEWIS?


I JUST WANT TO MEET THE BOY FROM TROY.
I WAS SO SCARED.
WHO IS THIS YOUNG MAN WHO WANTS TO DESEGREGATE TROY STATE?
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY OR DO.
DR. KING,
I AM JOHN ROBERT LEWIS.
I SAID MY WHOLE NAME.
DO YOU REALLY WANT TO GO TO TROY STATE?
YES, DR. KING.
I WANT TO GO TO TROY STATE.
THEY QUESTIONED ME ABOUT EVERYTHING--
WELL, YOU KNOW--
WHERE I WAS FROM,
HOW I WAS RAISED,
IF I KNEW WHAT I WOULD REALLY FACE.

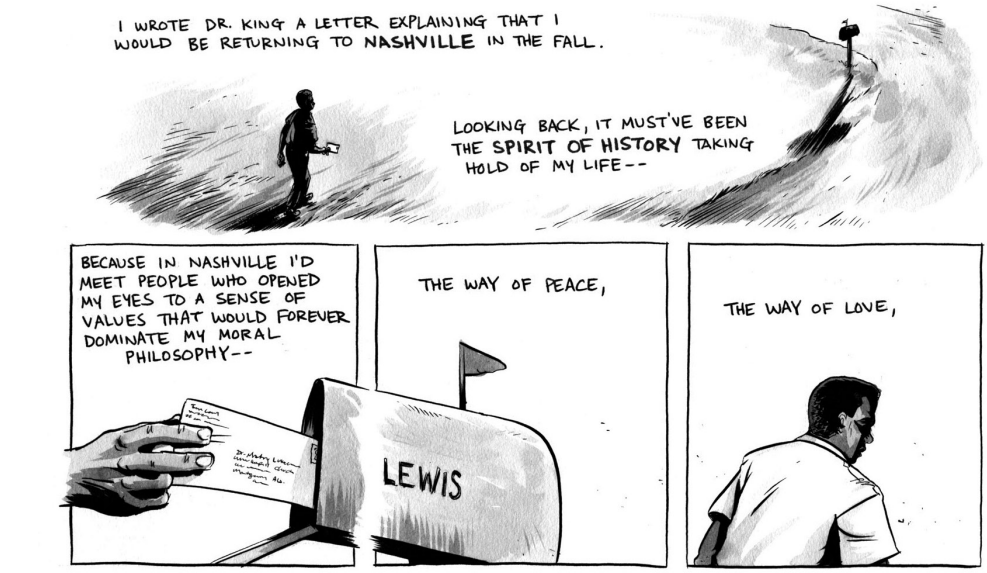
70


TO ATTEND TROY STATE, WE'LL HAVE TO SUE THE STATE OF ALABAMA AND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.
YOU'RE NOT OLD ENOUGH TO FILE A SUIT-- YOU'LL HAVE TO GET YOUR PARENTS' OKAY.
THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SIGN.
BUT IF YOU WANT TO GO, WE'LL HELP-- WE'LL RAISE THE MONEY TO FILE THOSE SUITS, AND WE'LL SUPPORT YOU ALL THE WAY.
BUT YOU MUST KEEP IN MIND--
YOUR PARENTS COULD LOSE THEIR JOBS. YOUR FAMILY HOME COULD BE BOMBED OR BURNED.
YOU MAY GET HURT--
or your family may get hurt.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN.
YOU NEED TO GO BACK TO TROY AND TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR FAMILY.

71


MY FATHER DIDN'T SAY A WORD TO ME ON THE RIDE BACK FROM THE BUS STATION, EITHER.
BUT THE NEXT MORNING THEY SAT ME DOWN FOR QUESTIONING, ASKING ME WHAT HAD HAPPENED THE PREVIOUS DAY.
I TOLD THEM.
AT FIRST THEY WANTED TO BE SUPPORTIVE. BUT THEY WERE AFRAID. NOT JUST FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR THOSE AROUND US, OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS.
THEY SAID THEY DIDN'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH FILING A SUIT AGAINST THE STATE OF ALABAMA. NOTHING. NOT ONE THING.
I WAS HEARTBROKEN, BUT IT WAS THEIR DECISION.

72


I WROTE DR. KING A LETTER EXPLAINING THAT I WOULD BE RETURNING TO NASHVILLE IN THE FALL.
LOOKING BACK, IT MUST'VE BEEN THE SPIRIT OF HISTORY TAKING HOLD OF MY LIFE--
BECAUSE IN NASHVILLE I'D MEET PEOPLE WHO OPENED MY EYES TO A SENSE OF VALUES THAT WOULD FOREVER DOMINATE MY MORAL PHILOSOPHY--
THE WAY OF PEACE,
LEWIS
THE WAY OF LOVE,


THE WAY OF NON-VIOLENCE.
KNOCK KNOCK
COME IN?

73

INTERVIEW



March:

Interview with Andrew Aydin and Nate Powell

Christopher Heaney

In June, the Supreme Court struck down the crucial condition of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that required state and local governments with a history of discrimination to receive the Department of Justice's approval when changing voting rules. Survivors and heirs of the Civil Rights movement decried the decision, worrying that the court had effectively rolled back a generation's efforts to assure the right of poor and minority Americans to vote.

"What the Supreme Court did was to put a dagger in the heart of the Voting Rights Act of 1965," Congressman John Lewis, U.S. Representative for Georgia's 5th congressional district since 1986, told the press. "This act helped liberate not just a people but a nation."

Lewis would know. Born in 1940, in Alabama, Lewis first aspired to be a preacher, giving sermons as a child to the chickens under his care. At twenty, as a black student at the American Baptist Theological Seminary, Lewis committed himself to the philosophy of nonviolence, which he and other students employed during a series of famed sit-ins to end racial segregation in Nash-

ville's lunch counters. In 1961 he was one of the first thirteen Freedom Riders, activists who challenged Southern laws enforcing racial segregation on buses. After police-sanctioned beatings by whites and Klansmen in Birmingham, Lewis and Diane Nash, a fellow member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), defied the federal government's go-slow stance and kept the Riders fighting. In 1963, now chairman of SNCC, Lewis was the youngest member of the "Big Six" leaders of the Civil Rights movement who helped organize the 1963 march on Washington. In 1964, he again put his body on the line, leading a campaign to register black voters in Mississippi. And on March 7, 1965, Lewis and Hosea Williams led the "Bloody Sunday" march over Alabama's Edmund Pettus Bridge, which ended when Selma police and state troopers rode down, tear-gassed, and beat protestors. His skull fractured, Lewis spoke to the press, demanding President Lyndon B. Johnson's involvement. Johnson sent the Voting Rights Act to Congress ten days later.[*]

As a Congressional Democrat, John Lewis is as committed to progressivism, justice, and nonviolence as he was in his youth. And in a most unexpected way, he remains in the vanguard. This past August he published the most radical rendition of his road to the Voting Rights Act yet: a comic book.

Titled March, *co-written with his press secretary Andrew Aydin, and illustrated by* New York Times*-bestselling comic book artist Nate Powell, it is the moving first volume in a projected three-volume trilogy covering Lewis's life in the Civil Rights movement. Elsewhere in this issue we offer a seven page excerpt from* March. *For this feature, Aydin and Powell took time before San Diego's Comic-Con to discuss* March *and its publication by Top Shelf Productions with* Appendix *editor Christopher Heaney. Interviewed separately, their responses were interwoven for the sake of continuity. Aydin and Powell each shared their thoughts on what it was like to adapt a sitting Congressman's story to a medium that Congress itself almost eviscerated during its 1954 hearings on the impact of comics on juvenile delinquency.*

Aydin and Powell addressed the thorny question of whether history teachers should use Lewis's graphic memoir as a primary or secondary source. They also debated the necessity of depicting violence in a comic book devoted to working towards nonviolence and love in politics today.

Also revealed? That John Lewis's involvement in the Civil Rights movement was itself inspired in his youth by a comic book about Martin Luther King. We hope that March *might similarly inspire others. As King himself said, "The arc of the Moral Universe is long, but it bends toward justice." In the wake of 2013's assault on the Civil Rights Act,* The Appendix *presents this glimpse into John Lewis's decision to share his own arc in one of the most bendable mediums of all.*



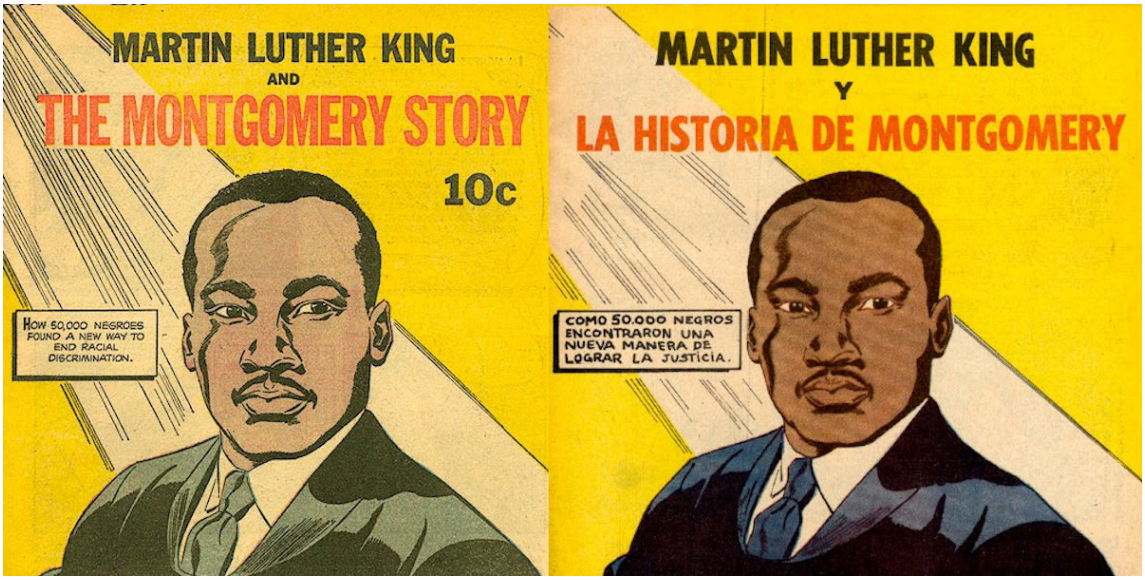
INTERVIEWER

John Lewis grew up in Alabama, studied in Tennessee, and ended up becoming a Congressman from Georgia. And along the way he read a very influential comic book—one we'll discuss in a moment. The two of you also grew up reading comics in the South, no?

AYDIN

I'm from Atlanta, born and raised. I grew up in a community where the history of the Civil Rights movement was something we talked about. I think the first time I went to the King Cen-

[*]The other five members: Martin Luther King, Jr., James Farmer, A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, and Whitney Young.



Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story, a comic that inspired Congressman Lewis as a young man. It has been translated into Spanish, Arabic, Farsi, and other languages.

ter I was in preschool. My mother was sort of a free spirit. She never stopped me from exploring my own curiosity. I grew up without a dad—he left when I was very young, and I never really knew him—so part of that curiosity went towards finding strong male role models. And if there's one place that's dominated by men, it's comic books. I would read these stories and find some sort of natural relation to them. I think the first time I got a comic was when my grandmother bought me one at a Piggly Wiggly in western North Carolina. *Uncanny X-Men*, with a lenticular cover.

POWELL

I was born in 1978. I grew up in a military family for the first ten years of my life, so I lived for a while on a base in Montana and in elementary school I lived in Montgomery, Alabama. When my dad retired we returned to Little Rock, Arkansas, where we lived when I was a baby. My parents and my brother, they all still live there. I've been drawing and reading comics since I was three or four years old and have been approaching it very seriously as a creator since I was twelve. It's one of those things I've never looked back from.

INTERVIEWER

What was your awareness of local history when you were a kid?

POWELL

Growing up with my parents, who were Mississippi baby boomers, I definitely was exposed to the 1950s and the 1960s history of the entire south. But really any kid grows up [in Little Rock] being very aware of the Little Rock Nine and Little Rock Central High and what happened there in 1957, and the place it holds in American history.

INTERVIEWER

You've shared a story, Nate, about driving past a KKK rally when you were a kid.

POWELL

Basically it was that in 1983, when I was living in Montgomery, my family and I were I think going up to Anniston, Alabama. And there's a small town a little bit outside Anniston and we were driving through at lunchtime, and in the middle of the town square there was a fully costumed Klan circle, and they were definitely circled around a giant cross. Now, in my memory the cross was burning but I can't say with a hundred percent certainty that it was *actually* burning. The whole experience was so bizarre and uncomfortable to me that I asked my parents, "What's *that*?" There was this moment of hesitation where my parents looked at each other before they told my brother and me a little about it. It was my first exposure to racism or the perception of people being of different races or ethnicities as a defining characteristic.

INTERVIEWER

How did *March* come about?

AYDIN

I was working on Congressman Lewis's campaign in 2008 as his press secretary, but I was 24 and I was by far the youngest person in the room. There were always these consultants around, and they were teasing me for going to a comic book convention after the campaign was over. That's not so common or popular in politics.

But the congressman stuck up for me and said, "You know there was a comic book during the movement? It was incredibly influential." And that turned out to be *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story*. I went to learn about it, and there was this epiphany moment of, "John Lewis, why don't you write a comic book?" I asked and I asked and one day he turned around and said "Ok I'll do it, but only if you write it with me." It was a put-up or shut-up moment.

INTERVIEWER

Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story is an absolutely fascinating element of this story. It was a comic book published in 1958 by the Fellowship of Reconciliation—or F.O.R., a group committed to the philosophy and discipline of nonviolence—and it dramatized the 1955 bus boycott in Montgomery Alabama for readers. Andrew, you said in another interview that copies of *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* have made it to South America, South Africa, Vietnam, and in 2011, Egypt. How is it that people keep rediscovering this comic?

AYDIN

It's usually some geek like me. The art historian Sylvia Rhor has written about how the Egyptian activist learned about it in about 2006, and [got] it translated. In 1959, when it was banned in South Africa because it was deemed inflammatory, I think it was the Christian missionaries who were getting it through the Fellowship of Reconciliation's Network. It ended up in Vietnam because of Hassler, the guy who wrote it, who went to Vietnam and became involved in the nonviolent response to the conflict. The Spanish-language version is the one that least is known about. The rumor is that Cesar Chavez used it during the worker's rights movement in 1968. If that is the case, that would be huge, but it's never been substantiated in any documented way.

"You know there was a comic book during the movement? It was incredibly influential."

INTERVIEWER

You've been researching *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* for a while. How did it get made?

AYDIN

Every time I turn over a new rock there's something waiting underneath. I just found a cache of 75 pages of documents from the organization that gave the grant that funded that comic book. You can see the drama of the situation where this was this one hell-bent man, Alfred Hassler, who really wanted to do this, who really thought it could work.

Interestingly, the comic book hearings [in Congress that tried to link the medium to juvenile delinquency made *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* more possible because it left so many people out of work, who were looking for any gig they could get. Former comic book publishing companies converted into non-profit publishing companies, publishing on-demand academic and educational comic books. The company that produced *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* for the Fellowship was owned by a guy named Eliot Caplan, who was the brother of [the cartoonist] Al Capp [creator of *Li'l Abner*]. The guy who helped Alfred Hassler write the script was Benton Reznick. But if you look him up in *The Ten-Cent Plague*, David Hajdu's book about the comic book hearings, he's listed in the back as one of those who never worked in the comic book industry again. And yet, here we find that after supposedly being drummed out of the comic book industry he was still making comics, but for a different publisher.

Still, Congress nearly destroyed comic books because they were afraid of their power and ability to influence young people. I think there's something truly beautiful about someone like John Lewis being a member of Congress and in some ways healing that wound. And in a unique way taking advantage of what they were so afraid of 55 years ago.

INTERVIEWER

So let's talk about *March*'s own interesting path to publication. You got help from Karen Berger, the editor of DC's mature line of comics, Vertigo, in crafting your pitch; and Jimmy Palmiotti at Marvel sent you Chris Staros's way, at Top Shelf, who then brought Nate Powell aboard. All the while you were writing with Congressman Lewis. What was that like, for this first volume and the volumes to come?

AYDIN

This is one of those projects where we didn't have a lot of time to sit down and work on it. We have full-time jobs. Congressman Lewis is the busiest person I've ever known. Last night he was voting until 11:30. This morning he was back at 9 for meetings. So our process was finding those small moments, like when we were on an elevator. "I have an idea—you like that? Oh, cool," and then we were back to work.

When I first started working on the scripts it would be these late nights where I would go home after work and just type. I would have questions and I'd call him and I'd interview him with an earpiece. "OK Congressman, tell me this story," and he would tell it to me with his own words. I had his memoir of the movement, *Walking with the Wind*, and a few other major books to serve as guideposts, but I knew a lot of his story already because I'd seen him tell it so many times. I give him the scripts to read at night and he'll read them and we'll talk about them. Sometimes here and there he'll say "You know, I remember this, maybe we could use that?" And so we put together these moments, stories, the way he wants to tell [them], and then I go back and write the scripts to make it a comic book. We're very collaborative.

POWELL

What's interesting about John Lewis is that the man is an orator. I wasn't aware of that until I started. I read his memoir, *Walking with the Wind*, and at first I thought "some of this stuff is verbatim in the comic. What's up with that?" But then I realized that this is an entirely different mode of storytelling, [drawing from Lewis's background as] an orator.

INTERVIEWER

Something that's going to be interesting for historians is how to use *March*—whether to teach it as a primary and secondary source, or something in between. There's the immediate "you are there" experience of Lewis's radicalization, narrated in his own words, but it's processed through memory, woven into a script by Andrew, and recreated in Nate's artwork. Is there a distillation happening? Is that the right way to characterize it?

AYDIN

I think you're absolutely right. I think we're all struggling to understand this project because it's never been done like this. There's never been a primary figure in history who's taken the time to work on a graphic novel like this. The closest thing I could ever find was a letter with edits sent by Dr. King to the Fellowship of Reconciliation in 1957 for the *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* comic book.

I can't think of anything else like it. I mean, *Maus*, which we love, but here it's adding a whole other layer and pushing it closer towards primary source material. I think there's going to be a debate over where that line is. I know we worked really hard to make sure that every detail was as accurate as possible. We've been in contact with at least a dozen of the photographers from the movement. You know, folks who were there during the March on Washington, who were there during the early days and the later days. We used an incredible amount of reference photos to make the visuals as accurate as possible. And it's to the Congressman's memory of the movement that most people defer.

There's a joke that Joe Lowery second-guessed the Congressman at one point and C. T. Vivian turned around and said "Don't second-guess the Congressman, he really remembers." His memory is vaunted.

POWELL

With the case of *March*, this is John Lewis's story, but as he admits in *Walking in the Wind*, it's not exactly his story: it's the story of him being a part of a massive social upheaval that needed to happen. So it's also a challenge of trying to be respectful to the fact that this was a struggle of millions of people, and there were dozens and at times hundreds of people who were doing the same hard work he was doing. While he is the star of this narrative, the challenge is trying not to make him the star all the time. It's about his role in something that belongs to all of us.

INTERVIEWER

I think that comes across in how *March* starts, with the harrowing Bloody Sunday march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. That flashback ends with Lewis losing consciousness while being beaten by the police, but he's not even identified at that point; it's really about *all* the people who walked across the bridge that day with him and Hosea Williams. The narrative then moves to a really optimistic moment in our present: the 2009 inauguration of President Barack Obama, which becomes the framing device for the rest of the volume. Andrew, how did you and Congressman Lewis decide to link those two moments?

AYDIN

The framework of starting on Inauguration Day developed after we went through it. I staffed [Congressman Lewis] that day, and it was almost exactly the way it happens in the book. How he wore a big black scarf; our telling him not to wear a hat; him saying things like, 'There was two feet of snow the day I sat in for the first time." So we framed it that way because I got to have this unbelievable day at work, witnessing a moment of history from a perspective that nobody else got to see. From the perspective of the guy that Barack Obama singled out to say, 'This day is because of you." It was a great way to tell both of those stories in a totally natural way. "The arc of history is long but it bends towards justice." You're not fighting for tomorrow, you're not fighting for a day, or a week, or a year—you're fighting for the tomorrows that actually come forty or fifty years from now. And so the inauguration put that in context.

INTERVIEWER

Will the next two volumes continue to use the inauguration as a framing device?

AYDIN

They have themes. The first theme, for the first volume, is New Beginnings: growing up, his first time in the movement, his first time preaching, his first arrest. Just getting up in the morning—the first part of the day. The second volume is about Endurance. And the third book picks up after the ceremony, at the reception, with the president. There are some brutally human moments that I don't think people knew about from that day, that when they read about will surprise them.

INTERVIEWER

So the third book deals with the achievement of Lewis's goals?

AYDIN

We're focusing on the Civil Rights movement. The congressman will say publically that he saw the Civil Rights movement as being over after the Voting Rights Act [was signed]. But there's an important epilogue in his personal service and his transition from activist to political operative. When he was kicked out of SNCC in 1966, he spent the next year or two gathering himself and then by 1968 he goes to work for Bobby Kennedy on his campaign. And that in and of itself is an incredible story that I'm looking forward to telling. I don't think that people realize that the Congressman campaigned with Cesar Chavez on the South Side of LA in 1968, and that he was with Bobby Kennedy on the evening he was assassinated—these moments that were so pivotal to our nation. So right now we're focusing on ending it in 1968, maybe just a little bit after.

INTERVIEWER

The first volume of *March* details Lewis's childhood preaching to chickens, his enrollment in divinity school, and his first forays into non-violent resistance in Nashville. What's striking is how specific so many of these moments feel—how intimate. That's partly due to Lewis's first-person narration throughout, but also because of the art. Nate, what sources do you use to visually reconstruct Lewis's life and the movement?

POWELL

Besides spending probably an hour a day looking at [contemporary] cars, technology, shoes, clothes, etc. using Google Image Searches, on a daily basis I reference *Walking with the Wind*. There's a book, *Freedom Riders*, by Raymond Arsenault, and a documentary of the entire bus journey. I just got a book yesterday called *Breach of Peace* by Eric Etheridge, which features profiles and mug shots of every single

freedom rider. And I also have a series of photographic books of the Civil Rights movement. One's called *Powerful Days*. One's called *Mine Eyes Have Seen*. And then I have a 1960s lifestyle illustration book that has maybe 500 pages worth of fashion design and commercial illustrations from the era to show aesthetic shifts and changes in popular culture at the time.

INTERVIEWER

There's a prejudice, I think among some, that a comic like this, or a graphic novel, can't be researched—that it can't have as great a documentary basis as an article, for example.

POWELL

You're absolutely right. American comics still have this inferiority complex. Every single comics creator—unless they live in a comics bubble, where all their friends are cartoonists—they have to deal with this. There's this perception that comics are "Books Lite." Like they're the Bon Jovi to the Metallica that is literature.

But *au contraire*! I sometimes take for granted how much more documentation that doing a nonfiction memoir like this, in comic book form, takes. With text there's a much more concrete application of references and sources. You're able to lift things and credit them. It's very clear to see what's coming from where. But in terms of accuracy and faithful *representation*, there's this added weight of the proof being in the visual pudding. So I spend a lot of time either just checking with Congressman Lewis, or even just asking my parents about certain elements of growing up in the 1950s or 60s in Mississippi. If something doesn't ring true or accurate, it's pretty immediately apparent when you're using visual art to represent a certain time and place.

INTERVIEWER

The department stores that Lewis and his fellow students sat in, for example—were you able to research what they specifically looked like, their layout?

POWELL

Well, I tried hard. In Book One I was actually able to find images of the exterior of the actual stores and in some cases find shots of the specific lunch counters. But for the most part, with the exception of these incidents—the sit-ins, the beatings—not a lot of people are going to be taking photographs of the inside of the department stores and still have those photos. So I certainly had to do enough research to be able to make a composite of what a Ward's counter would look like. I was able to go to Alabama in March and go on the Faith & Politics Institute Pilgrimage to Civil Rights spots with the Congressman and some other folks. So I was able to finally get inside some of these churches, go to some of these basements, go inside MLK's office in Montgomery and witness the space firsthand.

INTERVIEWER

Did you ever catch yourself thinking "Oh, maybe I didn't get it quite as right as I wanted"?

POWELL

Oh, all the time. With a book like this there's this line between accuracy and leaving enough room for gesture and iconographic representation to breathe life into something without it being dry. I feel like there's a point where I have to stop trying to nail everything one hundred percent because you're going to wind up with a boring history comic that looks dry because you're so concerned about sticking it in a certain place and time.

INTERVIEWER

There are two things that I find very powerful about your artistic style, Nate, both here and in an earlier memoir-type graphic novel about the Civil Rights movement that you illustrated, *The Silence of Our Friends*. The first is your ability to depict scenes that would be pretty leaden in other comic book artists' hands, like talking or riding bikes, and filling them with foreboding or joy. It reminds me of good Japanese manga comics, which use angles and impressionistic expressions, not exact realism, to convey emotion

POWELL

As I was working through the script for *Silence of Our Friends*, that's where I first developed an understanding for my role as the visual end of the storyteller. In absorbing all the information in the finished script, I had to learn how to also depict what was not included: tension, dread, the passage of time, and the way silence actually works. I think my greatest influence, [in terms of] the way my narrative flows, is Katsuhiro Otomo's storytelling style, specifically in a book called *Domu: A Child's Dream*, which I think he did right before he started *Akira*. Thank you for noticing that!

INTERVIEWER

The second thing I find so powerful in your work—and it's particularly striking to anyone who has thought about the mark that superhero comics have left on the form—is how you depict violence. Comic books in general have a very violent past, and superhero comics, for all their fun, also often romanticize violence. That's clearly inappropriate for books on the Civil Rights movement, and you handle that in a really interesting way.

POWELL

Yes, I think for *March* and *Silence of Our Friends* both—because they do contain so much brutality within them—one of the challenges was in depicting the violence within someone else's story without romance and sentiment—the way we're used to seeing violence depicted in comics. And by violence I also want to include the use of racist language. You want to make sure that you're representing something as it occurred, and that by remaining as close as possible to a depiction of actual events you can take the sheen off the violence and the language, letting you see it in a more brutal light than you would in any other way.

INTERVIEWER

Which leads us to what might be *March*'s most brutal image: the body of Emmett Till, whose murder in Mississippi in 1955 left a deep, awful impression on Lewis, who was fifteen at the time, and the African-American community.

POWELL

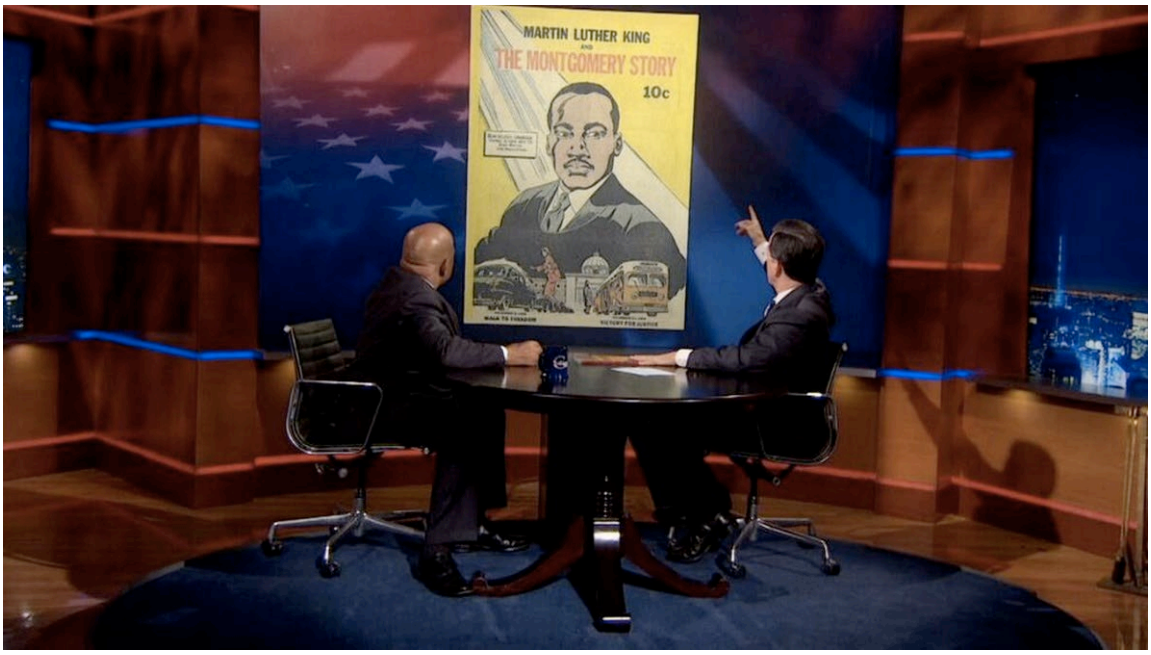
Yes.

INTERVIEWER

Outside of Lewis's memory of the news, you depict both Till's funeral, as well as his body being pulled from the water. Did you grapple with how directly to draw those moments?

POWELL

Certainly. I think that those two panels with Emmett Till are the most potent examples of the issues of representation and authorship in the book. When I did that page, I was finished with [it] by eleven in the morning but I was done drawing for the day because [it] was so intense. Now, in the original script, the captions and text describe what happened when



Congressman Lewis appearing on the August 13 episode of *The Colbert Report*.
Comedy Central

allegedly he said "Bye, baby," to that white girl, but the representation of Emmett Till['s body after being pulled from the water] was not as explicitly described in the script as I made it. To make sure I had it right, I had to see pictures of it … There was a shot that was more explicit of his mother crying at his casket—and there's a photo of this as well. Originally I drew that panel with his mother at his funeral, but it was really direct—as direct as the photo—and I actually felt it was a little bit cheap. That had to do less with the representation of Emmett Till's body as it did with the representation of his mother in anguish. I felt that wasn't appropriate. So I pulled the camera back and made it a silhouette shot because… we get it.

But with the depiction of Till's body actually being pulled from the river … this goes back to these questions of making violence plain and thus making it truly shocking and brutal again. With that panel I thought that my responsibility was in a very plain way to draw his body with the fan unit and the rope and the chains as accurately as I could from his funeral and his autopsy without being excessively graphic—but in a way that showed the bloating, the disfigurement that occurred as a result of the violence committed upon him. To basically allow the image to do its own shocking of the reader. The violence is also big in in Book 2, because people get *destroyed* during the Freedom Rides. There are times where I'm drawing people getting crates smashed over their heads and dragged under cars, and a white parent holding an unconscious man between his knees while encouraging his kids to claw his face up and claw his eyes out. There are times where I actually catch myself [thinking] "Is this necessary? This is a little much."

But you have to remember that this is not a Frank Miller script, this is what actually happened to real people and Lewis, the person who wrote this, saw it happen. And it changes the representation of violence completely. It allows you to approach it in a way that it does its own shocking simply by de-

picting the image itself. You don't have to do much else than that.

INTERVIEWER

The panel after Till gets pulled from the water depicts one of the white defendants acquitted of the murder, being congratulated by his lawyer. The contrast is quite upsetting.

POWELL

What's crazy is that in one of our final edits we actually added a line of text to the end of that panel because I did a little follow-up and I was able to verify that the very next year after they were acquitted, I think it was like five months later, one of the murderers admitted on TV that they killed Emmett Till. None of them ever faced any charges. One of the dudes is still alive and lives in Glasgow, Kentucky. He may have died of cancer in the last couple of years. But these dudes were alive and kicking, living their normal lives, having confessed on TV to murdering a man but due to double jeopardy were able to get away with it. To me that panel is as horrifying as Emmet Till's panel.

INTERVIEWER

Since you finished *March*, the story it documents has gone from history to current events one again. We're talking shortly after the Supreme Court made the decision that, as Congressman Lewis said, "put a dagger in the heart of the Voting Rights Act of 1965." Meanwhile, the two of you have participated in panels on graphic arts and social change. What do you think *March* says, moving forward, that you might not have thought it did when you started it?

AYDIN

We couldn't have foreseen this five years ago when we started this. But the Congressman has this saying that sometimes you're being swept up in the spirit of history—the spirit of history is pushing you in a certain direction. There are plenty of moments in his life where something didn't work out for him but in the end it was this unbelievable thing that opened so many other doors and experiences. Maybe this is premature, but I think maybe we're seeing something like that. Something that's bigger than him or I or any of us. Because it's time for the next generation to step up.

Because it's time for the next generation to step up.

POWELL

When I started the scenes on Emmett Till through Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott, I realized that while as a Southerner growing up in the 80s, I was very aware of who Rosa Parks was by the time I was seven, and what she meant for the rest of the South and America, 20-year-olds in 2013 may well not know who she was and what she did, or Malcolm X, for that matter, or even Dr. Martin Luther King. And as our baby boomers get older, and our first-person exposure to the Civil Rights story begins to thin, it becomes even more imperative to create a breathing document of that time.

The fact that just a week ago today was the gutting of the Voting Rights Act—which was a direct result of John Lewis and the his friends and other activists getting supremely beat down by the state troopers and white supremacists in Selma in 1965—is so unfortunate. It's shocking and mind-blowing that this is now a news item instead of being something you need to write about that happened fifty years

ago. But it's a wakeup call. All of a sudden you're moving closer to 1964 than you were a couple months prior.

INTERVIEWER

Andrew, you've called Congressman Lewis a "Radical for Love." What does that mean, to you?

AYDIN

I think John Lewis is a man who has had unbelievable wrongs done to him. And yet he never became bitter. He never became hostile. And in fact he learned through his devotion to the philosophy and discipline of nonviolence to love the people who were doing the wrong to him. And I think about that in my own life and how people who make me mad—Lord knows I get mad enough at the cable company—but these people were beating him, these people were trying to kill him, and yet he still found it in his heart to love them, and believe they could make a contribution to our society. You know, after Barack Obama was inaugurated, a guy from Rock Hill, South Carolina came to the office and apologized for beating Congressman Lewis in 1961. And it was a powerful moment not just because of what the inauguration meant to people, but what it meant for John Lewis to be able to forgive him.

POWELL

I want to add that Congressman Lewis is the genuine article and so obviously this is his story and so from a professional perspective and an ethics perspective from his side, I defer to him. Getting to read about him just having this incredible vision from a young age, just seeing past so many social constructs we establish as human beings to each other, his ability to be truly dedicated to kindness, to forgiveness, to real progress—it makes you feel like a dumbass in the best possible way. Hearing these tales of former Klansman or former police officers reaching out to him for forgiveness, admitting that they put him in the hospital once, and his ready acceptance of that apology, his ability to forgive, an ability to see the big picture—you know this is the kind of thing people want to treat as a cliché, they want to treat the spirit of forgiveness as a weakness. But getting to see somebody who really has lived it and breathed it and continues to fight the good fight—it's something that becomes more vital to me every day, just the fact that he's willing to put the effort forward to forgive people who have committed such unspeakable acts against him.

AYDIN

When I say that John Lewis is a Radical for Love, I mean that I think our society has become so focused on getting even, on conflict almost as a lifestyle. I mean that his ability, his capacity to love everyone, people who have done him right, people who have done him wrong, is something we all need to learn how to do. This is a man who can exist in the United States Congress and bring to something as abstract as policy a point of view that preaches loving each and every one of us. When you think of that as a policy perspective… We're so worried about dollars and cents, and bombing a country and staying safe, that we've completely forgotten what it's like to love the fact that we're American, to love other Americans. We're too afraid to love people. We're too afraid to _feel_ love. And that's his message. Don't be afraid to love people. Don't be afraid to love everyone, because it will change your point of view. And it will make your life better. And it will make everyone else's life better too.

I guess that's what I mean.

The Appendix
Appendixed.

By Kevin Cannon

Cold Cartography: The First Thule Expedition to Greenland, 1912

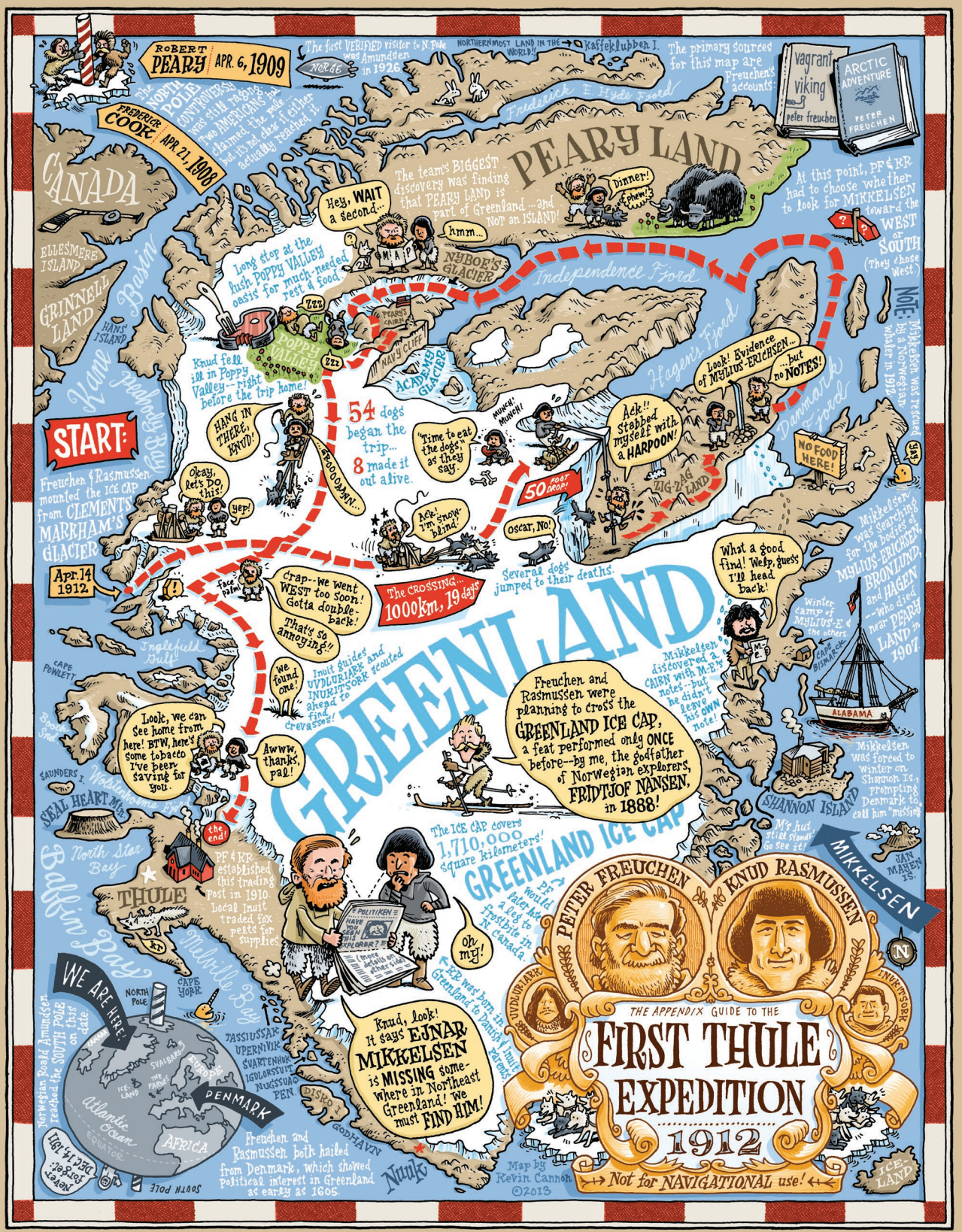
Kevin Cannon knows his science history. As one half of the Minneapolis-based cartooning studio Big Time Attic, Cannon has co-illustrated graphic histories of evolution, the space race and bickering paleontologists in the American West. On his own, he's the creator of Army Shanks, a hard-drinking pirate, former member of the (fictional) Royal Canadian Arctic Navy, and star of two largely hilarious and surprisingly moving graphic novels, Far Arden *and* Crater XV. *Kevin Cannon and the other half of Big Time Attic, Zander Cannon—no relation—built up a buzz for* Crater XV *and Zander's new work,* Heck, *with an ambitious digital project named Double Barrel.*

Impressed by the Double Barrel initiative and knowing Kevin's interest in the history of exploration, The Appendix *reached out to see if he might have a comic history to contribute. He did us one better and proposed a "cartographic biography" of a little-known Danish explorer named Peter Freuchen who explored Greenland, lived with the Inuit, lost a leg to frostbite and, in one disastrous episode, claimed that he dug himself out of an ice cave with a knife formed of his own frozen excrement. Freuchen's life turned out to be too rich, in fact, so Cannon hunkered down to create a cartographic chronicle of the First Thule Expedition, in 1912, in which Freuchen and the Inuit-Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen traveled a thousand kilometers across Greenland's inland ice by dogsled. "I think polar exploration had gripped me because of its grittiness and lack of sexiness," Kevin explains. "There are no Jack Sparrows in polar exploration."*

The beautiful and wry result, this issue's 'The Appendix, *Appendixed,' bookends the conversation this issue started with our 'Open Source' on the Cempoala map of sixteenth-century Mexico. Similar to the Cempoala map, a very local representation of an indigenous community, Cannon warns readers that the map is his personal interpretation of events, meant to*

> excite and inspire people who—like me—once viewed Greenland as a big ice-covered rock. Real historians and cartographers will note that besides the obvious fact that the scale is completely off, certain place names are incorrect as I used Freuchen's account more than modern maps. Due to space limitations, I was also forced to leave out certain anecdotes, like Freuchen's dive underwater to fetch his lost theodolite or the fact that Freuchen himself was on the Mylius-Erichsen expedition that started the whole chain of events in the first place.

For those stories, he recommends Freuchen's memoir, the terrifically titled Vagrant Viking. *In the meantime, we hope you get lost in Greenland with Freuchen, like we did.*


ROBERT PEARY APR. 6, 1909
FREDERICK COOK APR 21, 1908
the NORTH POLE CONTROVERSY was still raging. Two AMERICANS had claimed the pole and it's not clear if either actually reached it.
The first VERIFIED visitor to N. Pole was Amundsen in 1926
NOR 26
NORTHERNMOST LAND IN THE WORLD!!
Kaffeklubben I.
The primary sources for this map are Freuchen's accounts:
vagrant viking
peter freuchen
ARCTIC ADVENTURE
PETER FREUCHEN
Frederick E. Hyde Fjord
PEARY LAND
CANADA
ELLESMERE ISLAND
GRINNELL LAND
HANS ISLAND
Kane Basin
Jeffery Bay
The team's BIGGEST discovery was finding that PEARY LAND is part of Greenland ...and NOT an ISLAND!
Dinner!
Ephew!
Hey, WAIT a second...
M.I.A.?
hmm...
NYBOE'S GLACIER
Independence Fjord
At this point, PF & KR had to choose whether to look for MIKKELSEN toward the WEST or SOUTH (They chose West.)
NOTE: Mikkelsen was rescued by a Norwegian whaler in 1912
Long stop at the lush Poppy VALLEY oasis for much-needed rest & food.
zzz
PEARY'S CAIRN
NAVY CLIFF
POPPY VALLEY
ACADEMY GLACIER
Knud fell ill in Poppy Valley--right before the trip home!
Hagen Fjord
Look! Evidence of MYLIUS-ERICHSEN...
...but no NOTES!
Denmark Fjord
START:
HANG IN THERE, KNUD!
NNNOOOOO...
54 dogs began the trip... 8 made it out alive.
"Time to eat the dogs," as they say.
MUNCH! MUNCH!
Ack!! Stabbed myself with a HARPOON!
50 foot drop!
ZIG-ZAG LAND
NO FOOD HERE!
yes
Freuchen & Rasmussen mounted the ice cap from CLEMENTS MARKHAM'S GLACIER
Okay, let's DO this!
yep!
Ack! I'm snow-blind!
Oscar, No!
Several dogs jumped to their deaths.
Apr. 14 1912
face palm
Crap--we went WEST too soon! Gotta double-back!
That's so annoying!!
The CROSSING... 1000km, 19 days
Mikkelsen was searching for the bodies of MYLIUS-ERICHSEN, BRONLUND, and HAGEN --who died near PEARY LAND in 1907.
What a good find! Welp, guess I'll head back!
Winter camp of MYLIUS-E & the others
Ingefield Bull
CAPE POWLETT
GREENLAND
we found one!
Inuit guides UVDLURIAQ and INURITSORK scouted ahead to find crevasses!
Mikkelsen discovered a CAIRN with M-E's notes--but he didn't leave his OWN note!
Look, we can see home from here! BTW, here's some tobacco I've been saving for you.
Awww, thanks, pal!
Freuchen and Rasmussen were planning to cross the GREENLAND ICE CAP, a feat performed only ONCE before--by me, the godfather of Norwegian explorers, FRIDTJOF NANSEN, in 1888!
ALABAMA
Mikkelsen was forced to winter on Shannon Is., prompting Denmark to call him "missing"
SHANNON ISLAND
SAUNDERS I.
SEAL HEART MTS.
Wostenholme Fjord
the end
The ICE CAP covers 1,710,000 square kilometers!
GREENLAND ICE CAP
It's just still standing to see it!
MIKKELSEN
JAN MAYEN IS.
North Star Bay
Baffin Bay
THULE
PF & KR established this trading post in 1910. Local Inuit traded fox pelts for supplies.
PF would later lose a leg to frostbite in N Canada
Oh my!
PETER FREUCHEN
KNUD RASMUSSEN
Melville Bay
WE ARE HERE!
NORTH POLE
CAPE YORK
TASSIUSSAK
UPERNIVIK
SVARTENHUK
IGDLORSSUIT
NUGSSUAQ PEN
DISKO
Knud, look! It says EJNAR MIKKELSEN is MISSING somewhere in Northeast Greenland! We must FIND HIM!
KR was born in Greenland to Danish/Inuit parents.
THE APPENDIX GUIDE TO THE
FIRST THULE EXPEDITION
1912
Not for NAVIGATIONAL use!
UVDLURIAQ
INUKSUK
INUITSORK
ICE-LAND
SVALBARD
ICE-LAND
FAROE
EUROPE
DENMARK
Atlantic Ocean
EQUATOR
AFRICA
SOUTH POLE
Norwegian Roald Amundsen reached the SOUTH POLE on this date
Depart Dec 8th, 1871
Arrive Dec 14, 1871
Frederick and Rasmussen both hailed from Denmark, which showed political interest in Greenland as early as 1605.
GODHAVN
Nuuk
Map by Kevin Cannon ©2013



